DH
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The Power of Good

Aaron's ton carries India to U19 ODI WC final

Stars in 7-wicket win over Afghanistan

Page 14

Timmapur stands his ground, says won't quit

Page 4

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

India flags concentration of critical minerals

Jaishankar stresses de-risking supply chains

Page 10

State

C T Ravi suspended for defying Chair in Legislative Council P.4

State

Vaishnaw promises to develop Bengaluru–Pune bullet train P.3

Business

'US trade deal to give edge to exporters' P.11

Nation

Census to include caste query in phase-2 P.8

Quickly

3 terrorists killed in J&K encounters

Three suspected Pakistani terrorists, including a self-styled top commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, were killed in two encounters on Wednesday. While two terrorists were trapped inside a cave in Udhampur district, another suspected Pakistani terrorist was killed in an operation in Kishtwar district.
Details on Page 9

12 get 5-yr RI for parading woman naked

The 10th Additional District and Sessions Court on Wednesday convicted 12 persons, including six women, and sentenced them to five years of rigorous imprisonment for assaulting a Scheduled Tribe woman and parading her naked at Hosa Vantmuri village in Belagavi taluk on the intervening night of December 10-11, 2023.
Details on Page 5

IndiGo unfair biz: CCI orders investigation

The Competition Commission on Wednesday ordered a detailed probe against IndiGo for unfair business practices, nearly two months after the country's largest airline cancelled thousands of flights due to operational issues, causing hardships to passengers.
Details on Page 8

Anthropic tool: IT stocks slide; Infy drops 7%

IT stocks tumbled on Wednesday, with Infosys slumping over 7%, in-line with heavy selloff in tech companies in the US. Investors were spooked on Tuesday by news that AI startup Anthropic had unveiled a tool that could be used by firms to carry out legal work.
Details on Page 11

From Feb 9, pay Rs 1-5 more for metro rides

BMRCL to hike fares by 5% under annual revision; minimum Rs 11, max Rs 95

BENGALURU, DHNS

Metro rides in Bengaluru will get costlier from February 9, with fares set to rise by 5% across all 10 fare zones, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The minimum fare will increase from Rs 10 to Rs 11, while the maximum will go up from Rs 90 to Rs 95. Fares will be rounded off to the nearest rupee if the hike is 50 paise or more, the sources added. For instance, a Rs 30 ticket will be rounded off to Rs 32, instead of Rs 31.5.

The hike is being implemented in line with the Fare Fixation Committee's 2024 report. *DH* had reported this in September 2025.

On February 9, 2025, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) had raised fares by an average of 51.55% before discounts and 46.39% after discounts, translating to annual hike of 6.87% since June 2017, the last time the fares were revised.

Following public backlash, the maximum hike was capped at 71.43%.

The BMRCL implemented the hike after accepting the FFC report in toto. It says that under the Metro Railways Act, 2002, the committee's recommendations are binding on it.

The BMRCL had sought annual automatic fare revision through a transparent formula to "improve its operating ratio on a continuous basis". Without this, its net loss would touch Rs 577 crore by 2029-30, it had noted.

In its submission to the FFC, the BMRCL noted that the state government may not continue to provide it with Shadow Cash Support (SCS) given its "present financial position". Karnataka, an equal partner in Namma Metro, provides SCS through budgetary allocation for cash loss reimbursement and interest-free sub-debt towards loan payment to the government of India and domestic financial institutions.

Although Namma Metro has achieved profit after interest in recent years, it still carries outstanding loan liabilities of Rs 13,106.65 crore and subordinate debt of Rs 21,521.23 crore.

Between 2025-26 and 2029-30, the BMRCL faces loan repayments of Rs 9,651.6 crore and depreciation costs of Rs 5,721.6 crore.
▸ Metro fare, Page 5

COSTLIER RIDES

Route	Current fare	New fare
MG Road to V Soudha	Rs 10	Rs 11
Indiranagar to KR Pura	Rs 20	Rs 21
Kengeri-Mysuru Road	Rs 30	Rs 32
Yeshwantpur to Majestic	Rs 40	Rs 42
Peenya to Chickpet	Rs 50	Rs 53
Silk Board to Bommasandra	Rs 60	Rs 63
MG Road-Whitefield	Rs 70	Rs 74
Madavara-Banashankari	Rs 80	Rs 84
Challaghatta-ITPL	Rs 90	Rs 95

"Delhi Metro's 4th FFC also recommended annual fare increases in 2017, but fares were not raised until 2025, that too only modestly. Delhi Metro fares are still lower than Bengaluru's

Satya Arikutharam
Independent mobility expert

WHAT THE CM SAID

- Why the SIR exercise was not conducted in Assam, and alleged that West Bengal was being targeted
- Wrote six letters to the EC with all details, but received no reply
- Even names of poor people who shifted were deleted in the name of 'logical discrepancy'
- Termed the poll body a 'WhatsApp Commission' as it was sending notices to the citizens on the messaging app

SIR row: EC targeting West Bengal, says Mamata

Urges Supreme Court to save democracy

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday urged the Supreme Court to 'save democracy' and 'protect the rights of people', claiming that the state was being 'targeted' in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and questioned why the same yardstick was not applied in Assam.

She appeared before a bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi and alleged that micro-observers have been appointed to bulldoze people in the state. She made the submissions along with senior advocate Shyam Divan.

In her writ petition, she sought a direction to quash the orders issued by the Election Commission for SIR on June 24, 2025, and October 27, 2025.

Mamata Banerjee arrives at the Supreme Court on Wednesday. PTI

Mamata said, "The problem is that when everything is finished, we are not getting justice." Stating that justice is 'crying behind closed doors', Mamata said, "I have written six letters to the EC with all details, but I have received no reply. I am a very unimportant person. I am from a common family."

She described the EC as 'WhatsApp Commission', alleging that micro-observers were being drawn from BJP-ruled states.

She claimed the EC only 'targeted' Bengal ahead of the elections. "Why, after 24 years...what was the hurry to do the SIR exercise in three months? When the harvesting season is there...when people are travelling...more than 100 people died. BLOs died," she said.
▸ Mamata, Page 5

ADAG bank fraud case: Top court raps CBI, ED over delay

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Expressing displeasure over the "unexplained delay" in investigating alleged siphoning of huge sums of money, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the CBI and Enforcement Directorate to conduct a "fair", "prompt" and dispassionate probe into an alleged banking and corporate fraud of about Rs 40,000 crore involving the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group and Anil Ambani.

The Supreme Court bench asked why separate FIRs had not been registered on complaints from different banks.
Details on Page 9

Khemchand Singh sworn in as Manipur Chief Minister

GUWAHATI, DHNS: Yumnam Khemchand Singh, a two-time MLA belonging to the Meitei community, took oath as the new chief minister of Manipur on Wednesday evening, hours after nearly a year-long President's Rule was revoked in the strife-torn state.

Nemcha Kipgen, a woman Kuki MLA, took oath virtually from Manipur Bhawan, New Delhi, as deputy CM while Losii Dikho, a Naga legislator, was administered oath as the second deputy CM.

Khemchand Singh

Konthoujam Govindas Singh and Khuraijam Loken Singh, two Meitei legislators, took oath as ministers. Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla administered the oath at Lok Bhavan in Imphal.
Details on Page 8

No Modi speech as ruling party, Oppn spar in Lok Sabha

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled speech on Wednesday during the Motion of Thanks debate in the Lok Sabha did not take place as the House witnessed dramatic scenes, with several Opposition members trooping into the Well over the unpublished 'memoir' of former Army chief General M M Naravane.

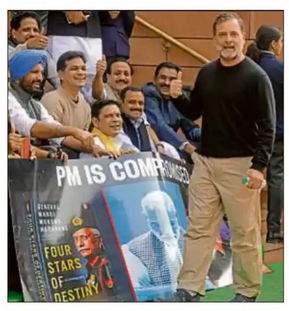
The Lower House witnessed continuous disruptions and was adjourned twice before it reconvened at 5 pm for the PM's address. However, BJP MP Sandhya Ray, who was on the Chair, adjourned the House for the day immediately.

Earlier in the day, Opposition MPs, including several women lawmakers, staged a protest near the PM's seat in the House. They carried a flex denouncing the PM as well as posters. The PM was not present in the House.

Later, the Treasury Benches and the Opposition sparred over BJP MP Nishikant Dubey flashing books against the Nehru-Gandhi family, including one on the Bofors scandal.

Some MPs asked Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was the acting Chair, how the books were allowed inside. Tenneti told Dubey that quoting books was not allowed as per the Speaker's ruling. A few irate Congress MPs went to the Speaker's Chambers to complain against Dubey.

Meanwhile, Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi flashed a copy of the memoir 'Four Stars of Destiny', which the government had claimed "doesn't exist", outside Parliament.
▸ Parliament, Page 5



LoP Rahul Gandhi and Opposition MPs protest outside Parliament. PTI

Game addiction: 3 teen sisters get a scolding, jump to death

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

In a shocking incident, three teenage sisters allegedly died by suicide in Ghaziabad on Wednesday after being admonished by their parents for their alleged addiction to an online Korean game.

According to police sources here, the trio, identified as Nishika (16), Prachi (14) and Pakhi (12), jumped from their ninth-floor flat in Bharat City Society in the wee hours of Wednesday. They died on the spot.

Other members of the family were sleeping in another room when the incident happened. While the cause of the deaths was being thoroughly investigated, an initial probe by the police indicated the trio was addicted to an online task-based Korean 'Love Game'.

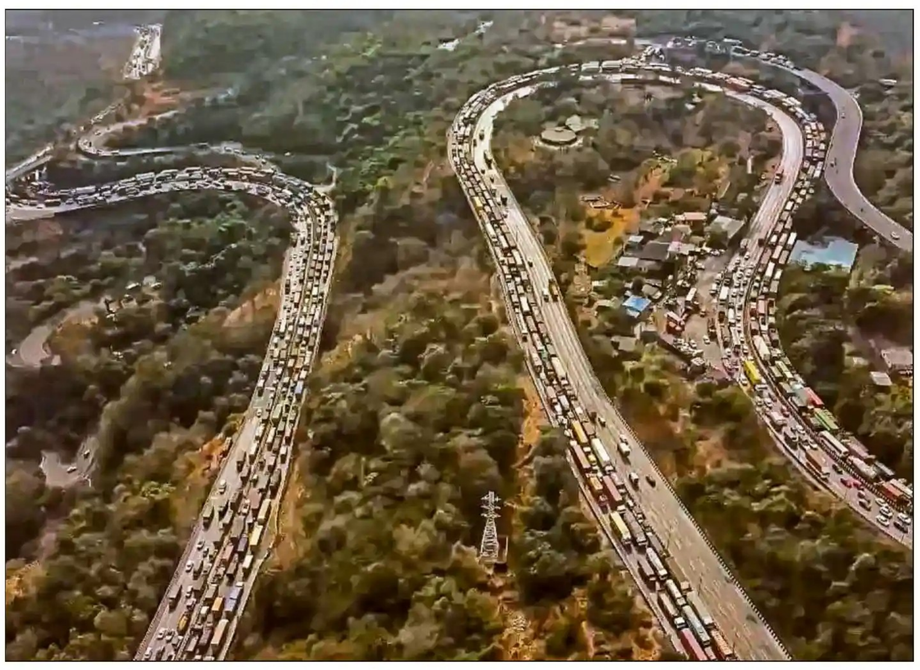
An eight-page purported suicide note recovered from the girls' room said "sorry papa" and had a "crying face" emoji. "Read the diary because all this is true," the note said. The content of the diary is not known yet.

The sources said the sisters did everything together. They had not been regular at the school after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The police have seized the mobile phone used by the girls.

Some reports said the parents had told them that they would be married off if they did not heed the warning against excessive mobile use. The addiction had adversely affected their studies and mental health.

HIGHWAY HOLD-UP



Hundreds of vehicles were stranded for almost 30 hours causing massive congestion on both carriageways of the Pune-Mumbai Expressway in Pune after a gas tanker overturned in the Khandala Ghat on Wednesday. PTI

SILENT KILLER

B'luru sees rise in respiratory illnesses as air quality worsens

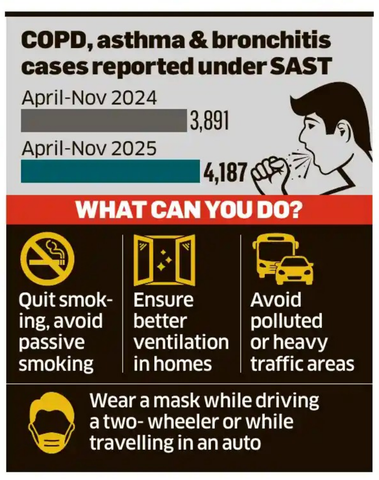
SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

With air quality deteriorating in many parts of Bengaluru, the number of patients presenting with respiratory illnesses such as asthma, bronchitis, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) has been rising steadily, according to health department data.

As many as 3,891 patients took treatment for respiratory illnesses under the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust (SAST) between April and November 2024, while the number rose to 4,187 during the same period in 2025.

Private hospitals are also witnessing a 10%-15% year-on-year increase in such cases.

While the increase cannot be attributed directly to air pollution, doctors say many patients are non-smokers with no previous history.


COPD, asthma & bronchitis cases reported under SAST
April-Nov 2024
3,891
April-Nov 2025
4,187
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
Quit smoking, avoid passive smoking
Ensure better ventilation in homes
Avoid polluted or heavy traffic areas
Wear a mask while driving a two- wheeler or while travelling in an auto

"Nearly 70% of the patients we get are non-smokers with no previous history. When all other factors are ruled out, the increase can only be attributed to air pollution," said Dr Manjunath PH, Consultant - Interventional Pulmonologist at a hospital in Kengeri.

Doctors noted that the number of people reporting at hospitals was especially high during the winter and Deepavali.

"Frequent cough, breathlessness and irritation in the respiratory tract are some common symptoms people present with, indicating the impact of air pollution on their health," said Sheetal Chaurasia, Consultant - Pulmonary Medicine at a private hospital in Whitefield.

"Poor air quality results in chronic airway inflammation, and inflamed airways are prone to infection. Both upper respiratory tract infections and lower respiratory tract infections have increased," she said.

However, the worst-affected are people with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

"For those with pre-existing conditions, the disease only gets worse with the deteriorating air quality. The frequency and the severity of the attacks increase drastically with poor air quality," said Dr Vandana P, a pulmonologist at a hospital on Bannerghatta Road.

Doctors also observed a concerning trend of increasing respiratory illnesses among younger adults and even children.

They advised the use of masks while travelling and to ensure better ventilation at home.

HC: Resettling Kogilu displaced not feasible

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court of Karnataka on Wednesday appointed advocate B V Vidyulatha as amicus curiae to assist the court on temporary rehabilitation of families displaced in the Kogilu Layout demolition.

A division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha also observed that given the factual situation, the request for in situ rehabilitation at Kogilu Layout may not be feasible. The bench was hearing a PIL petition filed by Zaiba Tabassum and others.
Details on Page 3

In Athani, officials try 'injection' to improve water table

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

The Minor Irrigation Department in Athani has proposed an experimental project to improve the groundwater table by "injecting" water from seasonal streams and nalas into aquifers by drilling at least 1,000 perforated borewells across the taluk.

Experts say Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) is a tested technology that replenishes groundwater by injecting stormwater, treated wastewater or surface water into aquifers for later use. However, they also warned that unless the project is implemented scientifically, it would be rendered useless if silt gets accumulated.

The department plans to seek a budgetary allocation of Rs 25 crore to drill nearly 1,000 borewells, spaced 500 metres apart, along 10–12 nalas in Belagavi district's Athani taluk.

Praveen Patil, assistant executive engineer, Minor Irrigation Department, Athani, said farmers in the region are drilling borewells deeper than 800 ft to access groundwater. "Overexploitation has severely impacted groundwater levels," he said, adding that the department has conducted geological studies in the area for the past 10 years and has prepared a plan to implement the project.

As a precursor to the project, the department carried out a pilot study on the banks of the Agrani river, which flows for nearly 45 km in the taluk.
▸ Borewells, Page 5

Hosur Road traffic disrupted for 10 days after part of NH 44 caves in near Attibele

The stretch at Attibele where NH 44 (Hosur Road) caved in on Wednesday morning. VIDEO GRAB

Large crater on the highway; no casualties

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Traffic on Hosur Road is likely to be affected for the next 10 days after a portion of National Highway 44 caved in near Attibele early on Wednesday, disrupting vehicular movement between Bengaluru and Hosur.

Police said the cave-in resulted in a large crater on the highway.

"Fortunately, there were no accidents. We immediately barricaded the area to prevent mishaps, as this stretch sees heavy vehicular movement," an Attibele police officer told *DH*.

The affected stretch was part of an ongoing road development project. The incident occurred during deep excavation work for a vehicular overpass, when a widened section of the road gave way.

The affected stretch was part of an ongoing road development project. The incident occurred during deep excavation work for a vehicular overpass, when a widened section of the road gave way.

Explaining the project, Archana Dharmakumar, General Manager (Technical) and Project Director, NHAI, said four accident-prone black spots had been identified along a 24.3-km stretch of NH 44, for which four vehicular underpasses had been approved to reduce fatal and injury-causing accidents.

"The work was under way at one of the identified sites near Chandapura when the incident occurred. The four underpasses are being built at a cost of Rs 113 crore," she said.

Repair and mitigation works by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have already begun and are expected to take about 10 days.

Traffic under watch

"We will monitor traffic movement and assess its impact on the soil and road crust. Based on that, we will decide whether traffic needs to be stopped, diverted, or allowed to continue with restrictions. Mitigation measures will take time," Archana added.

Meanwhile, the Attibele police have temporarily opened a service road to ease congestion.

Police helpline 112 integrated with Nimhans' Tele Manas

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru police on Wednesday announced the integration of their Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) Namma 112 with Tele Manas (14416), operated by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans), to ensure faster response to psychiatric emergencies.

The integration was formally launched in the presence of Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh and Nimhans Director Dr Pratima Murthy.

"The aim is to provide timely assistance to individuals experiencing mental distress. Calls received by Tele Manas that require police intervention, such as suicide risk or domestic violence, will be routed to Namma 112. Similarly, mental health-related calls received by 112 will be transferred to Tele Manas, where callers will receive counselling from qualified professionals," Dr Pratima explained.

She added that video consultations, e-prescriptions and referrals may also be provided when necessary. On average, the Tele Manas helpline receives nearly 5,000 calls a day.

As part of the initiative, 112 call handlers and police personnel will be trained to identify signs of psychological distress and respond with empathy and sensitivity. Workshops will also be conducted to facilitate interaction between police personnel and mental health experts.

Yeshwantpur station access shifted

BENGALURU, DHNS: In view of the ongoing redevelopment works at the Yeshwantpur railway station, access from the metro side has been temporarily shifted about 150 metres towards the main road near Platform No 6.

Unreserved ticket counters have also been relocated to the temporary access point.

Passengers can use a 30-metre-wide foot overbridge located nearby to move between platforms, the South Western Railway (SWR) said.

To ensure smooth passenger movement, the SWR has deployed Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel, set up a help desk and put up clear signage.

Frequent public announcements are also being made to guide passengers, the SWR added.

Soon, get all information about roads in South corporation

RIMS to offer public access to road data, services

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) will soon roll out a Road Information Management System (RIMS) to provide comprehensive details on roads within its jurisdiction.

The system is expected to place all road-related information in public domain.

BSCC Commissioner KN Ramesh, who conducted an inspection and coordination meeting on Wednesday, also directed officials to ensure that all applications for road-cutting and other related services are submitted through the newly developed 'MARCS' portal.

Addressing traffic congestion at Wipro Junction on Sarjapur Road, Ramesh said there was a need to provide a U-turn and relocate bus bays to ease traffic flow.

Regarding congestion at Kaikondrahalli Junction, it was discussed to remove the compound wall near Elements Apartment to allow the movement of small vehicles and to construct a bus bay in the vacant space, the BSCC said in a statement.

Ramesh further instructed officials to improve coordination among various departments in managing infrastructure projects and traffic issues.

BWSSB officials were directed to complete pipeline works near Fortis Hospital at the earliest.

During the inspection, traffic police also flagged waterlogging near Iblur and Agara lakes, and the need to desilt the drain near Silk Board Junction. The commissioner directed corporation officials to address the concerns raised by the traffic police.

East corp hopes to untangle land hurdle for proposed Hoodi flyover

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru East City Corporation is exploring the feasibility of adopting the Land Value Capture (LVC) system to acquire land required for the proposed Hoodi flyover project.

The decision was taken at a meeting held on Wednesday, chaired by Additional Commissioner (Development) Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar.

Land acquisition has emerged as a major bottleneck for the project, with landowners refusing to accept Transferable Development Rights (TDR) and instead seeking cash compensation. In this context, discussions were held on implementing LVC as an alternative and long-term solution.

The Additional Commissioner said several states have successfully executed infrastructure projects using the LVC model, thereby avoiding delays.

He appealed to landowners and the public to cooperate in adopting the LVC system for the Hoodi flyover, which would be the first such initiative undertaken by the Bengaluru East City Corporation.

Wanted for 24 murders, Bihar man & son nabbed from Bengaluru hideout

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bihar Police Special Task Force (STF), along with a team from the Bengaluru police, arrested two wanted criminals from northeastern Bengaluru, police said on Wednesday.

The accused, Manoj Singh, 65, and his son Manick Singh, 30, were arrested near Kodigehalli on Tuesday.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the duo, who had been hiding within the limits of the Kodigehalli police station, were handed over to the Bihar police on a transit warrant.

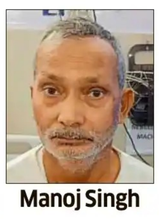
"They were allegedly involved in serious crimes in Bihar. Our personnel assisted the Bihar police team in identifying and securing the suspects," the commissioner said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) GK Mithun Kumar oversaw the operation on behalf of the Bengaluru police.

According to official sources, the father-son duo is accused in over 40 serious criminal cases, including more than 24 murders, besides several cases of kidnapping and extortion.

They allegedly ran a criminal gang and an organised crime syndicate, with cases registered against them in Bihar, Jharkhand and other neighbouring states. The duo also carried a combined bounty of Rs 3 lakh, sources said.

Manick Singh



Manoj Singh

The two were arrested in 2015, but later secured bail and went underground, continuing their criminal activities. Police suspect they initially took shelter in Jharkhand before moving to Bengaluru to evade arrest.

"It is suspected that they were operating their criminal network from Bengaluru, including making extortion calls. We are also probing whether they were involved in any criminal activities in the city and how they managed to evade authorities while staying here," a police source said.

BSc students interning at BMCRI protest over unpaid stipend

BENGALURU, DHNS: BSc (Allied Health Sciences) students undergoing mandatory internship at the Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI) staged a protest on Wednesday, alleging non-payment of stipend and lack of basic facilities.

As per the National Council of Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHCP) norms, interns are entitled to a stipend during the compulsory one-year internship. During this period, students are required to perform full-time clinical duties, including night shifts, and actively contribute to patient care, often working for over eight hours a day.

Students pointed out that allied health sciences' interns at government-run institutions such as Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Trauma and Orthopaedics, and Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research are paid regular stipends.

In contrast, BMCRI interns allege that they are not only denied stipends, but also government hostel facilities, forcing them to seek private accommodation.

They further claim that government-mandated provisions — including adequate infrastructure and dedicated academic buildings for allied health sciences — are not being provided.

Despite repeated representations to the authorities, students said no action was taken, leaving them with no option but to protest.

Man creates ruckus outside Bangalore Club

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 55-year-old man created a ruckus outside Bangalore Club on Lavelle Road in central Bengaluru, police said on Wednesday.

The man, who is employed with a private firm, stated that he had visited the club with his family on February 1 for food and drinks, but had forgotten his mobile phone on the premises.

When he returned the next day around 2 pm to retrieve the phone, he was allegedly denied entry. Police said the man, who was intoxicated, began arguing with security personnel and, during the altercation, removed his clothes.

The FIR states that a security guard allegedly assaulted him with a cane during the argument. The man, naked and agitated, then attempted to stop a red car that was exiting the club premises. While trying to drive away, the driver allegedly ran into him, resulting in injuries.

North corp seals four PGs

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru North City Corporation officials on Wednesday sealed four paying guest (PG) establishments for violating prescribed guidelines.

Corporation Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar said similar action would be initiated against all PGs that continue to flout norms or operate without authorisation.

Of the four PGs sealed, two were located in the Shettihalli area, while the remaining two were in Attur, Yelahanka 4th Phase.

During the enforcement drive, the corporation's health department vacated the residents and sealed the premises. One of the PGs was sealed due to poor hygiene in the kitchen.

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TENDER NOTIFICATION
Sealed quotations are invited from reputed, licensed (Regd. With PF/ESI)Security Agencies to provide **Security Services to Vijayanagara Club (Guards/Supervisors)**. Interested firms may submit comparative bids with relevant experience. On or before **15th February 2026**.Contact details. Mob. **9606098126**.
Sd/- Secretary, Vijayanagara Club.

No. 27-7/2018-Lib
Government of India
Ministry of Culture
Library Section
Recruitment
This is to inform that the Ministry of Culture invites applications for the post of Director General on deputation (including short term contract) basis in Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, Kolkata, an autonomous organization under the Ministry. The detailed advertisement may be seen on the Ministry's website (https://culture.gov.in/).
The last date for submission of the applications is 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News/Rozar Samachar.
CBC 09101-11-0035-2526

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Open Tender Notice No. BE-29-2025-26-OT-29 (Through E-Tendering)
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Tender No	Description in Work	Approx. Value	Tender Closing Date Time
BE-29-2025 -26-OT-29	1) Provision of electrical supply for installation of HABD in Bengaluru Division. 2) Proposed Road-1A on Rd-01 side at Nidvanda in Yasvantpur - Sampige Road Section. 3) KSR Bengaluru - Replacing Low height shelter of PF 7 & 8, Provision of shelter in open area between second entry building and platform entrance including granite flooring. 4) Balance work of Modernization of Infrastructure at Dharmapuri Good Shed-Electrical arrangements	Rs. 1,54,38,265/-	23-02-2026 / 15:00 Hrs

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Reference No. ECN-01-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Name of work	Approx. Value
Arranging additional High Tension Power supply to an extant dedicated feeder for 1150KVA (Existing 350KVA) totaling to 1500KVA from pottery Road to Bengaluru Cantonment Railway station.	Rs. 1,12,52,164.02

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 18-02-2026
For d tails log one www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution (Construction) Bengaluru
PUB/856/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26 Cantonment
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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No.: Tele_CCTV_15stns_SBC
Dated : 28-01-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work

Item of work	Approx. Value
South Western Railway - Bengaluru Division - Provision of CCTV at Goods shed of Dharmapuri, Hosur, Heelalige, Devarapalli, Bidadi, Nidvanda, Nelamangala, Bangarapet, Devangonthi, Maddur, Mandya, Settihalli, Dodballapur, Kyatsandra Depot and Penukonda station (Total 15 station) over Bengaluru Division.	Rs. 2,50,37,170.26

Last date for submission of bids : Upto 12:00 Hrs. on 19-02-2026
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Bengaluru
PUB/862/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26
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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

Another FIR against conman for forging Governor's signature

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru police have registered another FIR against suspected conman Sujayendra HN, alias Sujay, this time for allegedly forging the signature of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot.

The FIR was registered by the Vijayanagar police on January 21 after the case was transferred from the Vidhana Soudha police.

Sujayendra allegedly forged the Governor's signature and issued a letter in June 2025 to the vice-chancellor of Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), misusing the Governor's official letterhead.

"The official letterhead was misused and the signature was forged, which is a serious offence. The complaint seeks legal action against the individual for damaging the administrative integrity, legality and prestige of the Governor's office," the FIR stated.

Past fraud case

In November, Sujayendra, a resident of RPC Layout, was arrested by the Vijayanagar police for allegedly cheating a doctor from Jammu and Kashmir of Rs 2.7 crore.

At the time, he was accused of posing as a special officer to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and claiming links with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Searches revealed three seals purportedly of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, and a fake letterhead of the Karnataka Governor. A chargesheet is expected to be filed soon.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

International conference: On 'Current Innovations in Chemical and Applied Sciences'; Organised by Department of Chemistry, Bangalore University; AS Kirna Kumar, SR Niranajana and others to participate; C1 lecture hall, Chemistry Department, Jnanabharathi campus; 10 am.

CULTURAL

Vocal duet: Amrutha Venkatesh with Bombay R Madhavan (violin), Arjun Ganesh (mridanga), Chandasekara Sharma (ghata); Bangalore Gayana Samaja, KR Road; 5.30 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST
Mainly clear sky
TEMPERATURES

Maximum	29.0°C
Minimum	17.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	65%
Sunset (Feb 5)	6:22 pm
Sunrise (Feb 6)	6:45 am
Moonrise	8:40 pm
Moonset	8:25 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

GLOBAL OUTLOOK

'Emerging cities like Bengaluru will drive next wave of urban solutions'

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

John Dutton, Head of UpLink and member of the Executive Committee of the World Economic Forum, is in Bengaluru for the Yes/Bengaluru Challenge.

In an interaction with *DH*, he speaks about the competition and why Bengaluru was chosen. Edited excerpts:

Can you tell us about the Yes/Bengaluru Challenge?
The Yes/Bengaluru Challenge is an urban innovation competition under the Yes/Cities initiative of the World Economic Forum.

After San Francisco, Bengaluru is the second city where we are running this challenge. We have partnered with large corporations such as Deloitte, AWS, Cisco and Salesforce.

Anthill Ventures, the Greater Bengaluru Authority and United Way Bengaluru, a not-for-profit organisation, have also extended support.

What made Bengaluru a natural choice for UpLink?
Bengaluru is often described as the Silicon Valley of India, and for good reason. The city has a strong focus on technology and is moving very fast. There is a young, ambitious workforce eager to build solutions, along with a large pool of engineers.

What gives me particular optimism is the entrepreneurial mindset here — the willingness to learn, collaborate and experiment.

What kind of response did the challenge receive in Bengaluru?
We received 205 applications, of which 25 startups have been shortlisted.

Broadly, they fall into three categories. The first focuses on water — both access to clean water and wastewater treatment. The second is mobility, and the third looks at circular economy solutions, particularly around plastic waste and converting it into usable materials.

We expect to announce the winners by mid- to late March.

Is this a one-off event?
This is the first time the challenge is being held in Bengaluru, but it is certainly not a one-off. We have run more than 65 early-stage startup competitions globally. What has been especially encouraging here is the quality of the startups and the strength of the local ecosystem.

John Dutton

For instance, on water, we have a five-year global collaboration supported by HCL. Some of the solutions we saw in Bengaluru are comparable to innovations emerging elsewhere in the world, which opens up opportunities for collaboration.

While the challenges are global, our focus here is on solutions that are directly applicable to Bengaluru.

I strongly believe emerging cities like Bengaluru will drive the next wave of global solutions.

So this is a long-term commitment to the city?
Yes, we are committed to a multi-year engagement. We want to work with local organisations that can carry this initiative forward. In San Francisco, for example, we worked closely with the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and have gradually handed over responsibility to ensure long-term sustainability.

In Bengaluru, we are evaluating suitable local partners. We are fortunate to have strong corporate backing, which will enable grant funding for the winning startups, including a cash component of Rs 25 lakh each. But our approach goes beyond one-time support. It is about building networks — connecting startups with investors and corporates who can run pilots.

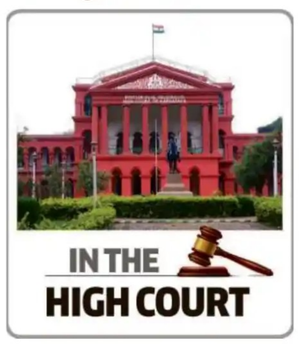
I also met Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Davos, where he spoke at an urban-focused session. With his support, the Greater Bengaluru Authority is now actively involved.

Beyond water, mobility and circular waste, what other areas could future challenges focus on?
Globally, we work across several sectors. Other focus areas include nature-based solutions, oceans, plastics and the circular economy, supply chains and electric mobility. We are open to focusing on issues that make sense both globally and locally.

The priority is to align innovation with the real needs of the city.

HC says evictees' rehabilitation at Kogilu Layout unfeasible

Appoints advocate Vidyulatha as amicus curiae



BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka on Wednesday appointed advocate B V Vidyulatha as amicus curiae to assist the court on the temporary rehabilitation of families displaced in the Kogilu Layout demolition.

A division bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C M Poonacha also observed that, given the factual situation, the request for in situ rehabilitation at Kogilu Layout may not be feasible.

The bench was hearing a PIL petition filed by Zaiba Tabassum and others questioning the demolition drive undertaken on December 20, 2025, at Waseem Colony and Fakeer Colony in Kogilu Layout.

The petitioners argued that the drive violated the guidelines issued by the Surpeme Court specifying that no demolition should be undertaken without issuing prior show-cause notices.

At the hearing, Advocate General Shashikiran Shetty responded to the petitioners' claim that some of the families evicted possessed temporary allotment letters. He submitted that verification showed that four of the seven letters were not found in the official files, while three other allotment letters pertain to some other location. The statement of objections and affidavit include complete details of the 167 affected persons.

On the other hand, the petitioners' counsel claimed that the number of affected persons is more than 800 and that four temporary rehabilitation centres, as claimed by the state government, are not functioning properly. To this, the advocate general informed the court that around 10-12 affected persons have visited the four centres.

Considering these submissions, the division bench appointed advocate BV Vidyulatha as amicus curiae to assist it in the case. The bench directed the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) to assist her.

The court has sought a report on the temporary rehabilitation measures taken, the details about people affected and whether adequate rehabilitation measures have been taken. It further said that in situ rehabilitation at Kogilu Layout itself may not be feasible, considering the submission by the state government that inhabiting a solid waste management site is highly injurious and fatal to the health of the persons on the site. The hearing has been adjourned to February 9.

According to the state government, an abandoned quarry spread over 9.36 acres and 5 acres was given to the BBMP as a landfill site by orders on November 28, 2014, and February 17, 2016. The entire land has been continuously used only for the disposal of solid waste and is being used by Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), the government submitted.

Govt forms panel to recommend reforms in technical education

It will examine unemployment among engg grads from state

BENGALURU, DHNS

The higher education department has constituted a committee headed by former director of IIIT-B, S Sadagopan, to address issues in technical education, including number of engineering seats going vacant.

The committee has been tasked with submitting recommendations to bring about reforms in higher education.

Others in the committee are Jagadish, S Gopalakrishna and Y Narahari, professors of Indian Institute of Science, Shyam S Rao, chief technical officer of Carborundum Limited, S Vidyashankar, vice chancellor of Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), director of University Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE), administrator of Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA), deputy secretary of higher education department and executive director of state higher education council.

The government has directed the committee to conduct a study and review the intake of computer science and related courses, revise curriculum of basic engineering courses as per current industrial and employment requirements, suggest measures to attract students to basic engineering courses and submit a report within a month.

During the admission process for undergraduate engineering courses through KEA for 2025-26, more than 9,000 seats in computer science and related disciplines had remained unallocated.

The committee will also look into the problem of unemployment among engineering graduates.

"Earlier, engineering colleges under the state's higher education department were renowned at the national and international levels for providing high quality technical education. However, according to recent media reports, only 17% of the students who graduate in engineering from the state are getting jobs," reads the government order.

"The minister for higher education has indicated that it is essential to comprehensively review the steps to be taken to revitalize core engineering courses like mechanical, civil and electrical to make them employable and attractive," it said.

Rly min promised B'luru-Pune bullet train corridor: HDK

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Union Steel Minister H D Kumaraswamy and Union Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Pralhad Joshi on Wednesday stated that the Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had promised to develop a bullet train corridor between Bengaluru and Pune.

Kumaraswamy and Joshi met Vaishnaw here separately and highlighted the need for the Bengaluru-Pune high-speed rail corridor. The railway minister responded positively, providing assurances on the proposal, both the union ministers said in separate statements.

The construction of this corridor would significantly boost overall development in large parts of Karnataka, particularly in districts such as Belagavi, Hubballi, Haveri, Davanagere, Chitradurga, and Tumakuru. The proposed link would enable rapid travel from Pune to several districts in Karnataka (approximately 6–7 districts), enhancing connectivity, trade, and mobility between the two key cities and their surrounding areas, the statement added.

In her Union Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced plans to develop seven new bullet train corridors, including two high-speed corridors involving Karnataka: Bengaluru–Chennai and Bengaluru–Hyderabad.

Kumaraswamy said that Vaishnaw assured of providing stoppage of Wodeyar Express train at Ramanagar Station. Vaishnaw also promised to take up early completion of pending railway works in Mandya district, he added.

Before registering FIR, police should ascertain if it's cognizable offence: HC

BENGALURU, DHNS: Police's function before registering an FIR is not to determine culpability but merely to ascertain whether the information discloses the commission of a cognisable offence, according to the High Court of Karnataka.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj ruled this while directing the Hulimavu police in Bengaluru to register an FIR on a complaint filed by the petitioner and complete the investigation within 90 days.

The petitioner, B H Nagaraj, contended that while he continued to be a one-third partner in a firm 'Mithila Land Developers', the two other partners — his brother and sister-in-law — constituted a second partnership firm with the same name and style, opened a separate bank account, and channelled all revenues arising from the development and sale of sites into it.

According to the complainant, his partners misappropriated the funds by transferring to the new account. On September 29, 2025, Nagaraj filed a complaint with the Hulimavu police for offences under IPC sections 323, 324 and 504. Police rejected the complaint stating that allegations are civil in nature.

Challenging this, Nagaraj argued that once the complaint, on the face of it, discloses commission of cognisable offences, the obligation of the police is to register an FIR and investigate the matter.

On the other hand, Nagaraj's brother and sister-in-law argued that if an FIR has not been registered at the police station, a writ petition would not be maintainable. In the event of refusal by the police, the petitioner is entitled to approach the superior officers of the police station concerned, and in the event of continued inaction, to initiate proceedings by way of a private complaint, they submitted.

Justice Govindaraj said that a refusal by an officer in charge of a police station to record information, without application of mind or without taking a conscious decision, stands on a materially different footing from a rejection of a complaint after forming an opinion that the allegations do not disclose any cognisable offence and pertain only to civil disputes.

The endorsement issued by the police discloses no analysis of these material aspects, the court said.

After perusing the complaint, it noted that the controversy pertains to the circumstances, intent and consequences surrounding the creation and operation of the second partnership firm.

"The Station House Officer has proceeded on a broad and impermissible assumption that the dispute is civil in nature, without examining whether the allegations, if taken at face value, disclose cognisable offences. Such an approach amounts to premature adjudication and abdication of the statutory duty to register an FIR where cognisable offences are disclosed. The function of the police at the pre-registration stage is not to determine culpability, but merely to ascertain whether the information discloses the commission of a cognisable offence," Justice Govindaraj said.

Botanical Survey of India to assess threats to Neelakurinji

Flower blooms once in 12 years; attracts thousands to Western Ghats

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Botanical Survey of India's three-member team will select Neelakurinji samples from Bababudangiri-Kudremukh, Annamalai-Eravikulam, Nilgiri, Palani and among the smaller outliers of Shola-grassland ecosystems ranging from 1,300 to 2,400 metres of elevation in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, for the study.

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI), a premier government body engaged in taxonomic research, has proposed to study the threats faced by Neelakurinji, a flagship floral plant of the Shola grasslands of the Western Ghats, which blooms once in 12 years.

The institute has set up a three-member team for reassessment and re-validation on the threat status of the plant (Strobilanthes Kunthiana), whose rare flowering brings thousands of people to the Ghats.

The team will select samples from Bababudangiri-Kudremukh, Annamalai-Eravikulam, Nilgiri, Palani and among the smaller outliers of Shola-grassland ecosystems ranging from 1,300 to 2,400 metres of elevation in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the BSI together filed a joint affidavit before the National Green Tribunal stating that despite its ecological and symbolic significance, the species was officially evaluated on a global scale only in 2024, with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listing it as a vulnerable species.

"Its unique 12-year mass-flowering cycle -- while a biological marvel -- poses significant challenges for population monitoring and environmental assessment, often delaying critical conservation interventions. The survival of Neelakurinji is currently jeopardised by the systematic fragmentation of the montane grasslands," their joint statement said.

Threat assessment

The field observations will be integrated with land-use change data and supplements from the state forest departments of the three states to evaluate habitat degradation, invasive species, the impact of tourism and plantation encroachment.

The IUCN criteria will be applied to assess the level of threat faced by the plant. Population reduction, restricted geographic range with decline or fluctuation, small population size and decline, very small or restricted population and quantitative extinction risk analysis.

The study, estimated to take about six months, will also throw light on the altitudinal and climatic distributions. "This analysis will define the environmental parameters and habitat requirements critical to the taxon's survival throughout its natural range."

A senior official noted that the impact of linear projects, like roads and transmission lines, along with power generation and water diversion projects, is yet to be assessed.

"A cumulative assessment of the damage and habitat degradation caused by such projects during the construction and operation state is the need of the hour to conserve many species of flora and fauna," he said.

Launch of new tech for better investigation of road accidents today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR), a new technology aimed at strengthening the investigation of road accidents and providing speedy insurance compensation, is set to be implemented in the state, starting February 5.

It will be inaugurated by Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy at the closing ceremony of the National Road Safety Month 2026, at Palace Grounds at 10 am.

The programme is being organised by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, the Transport Department and the Police, among others.

As a part of the event, one main stage and two sub-stages will be set up, where experts from various fields, such as doctors, advocates, Information Techology experts and insurance company officials, will be present to conduct technical sessions and panel discussions on road safety and the implementation of e-DAR, Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said.

Crores lost in cyber fraud, account holder arrested

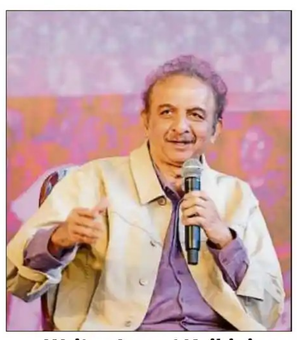
HUBBALLI, DHNS: A Bank of Baroda account at the Keshwapur branch has been frozen after investigators linked it to multiple cyber fraud cases involving losses worth crores of rupees.

The account belongs to Irfan, a resident of Gopanakoppa, and has allegedly been used over the past two years to route illegal transfers across banks nationwide. The probe began after several victims complained of losing money in online scams. When they contacted the national cybercrime helpline 1930, digital transaction trails revealed that the stolen funds had been transferred to Irfan's account, which was opened under the name "Cooking with Catering."

Cyber police arrested Irfan and questioned him. Bank officials have been asked to submit complete transaction records. Preliminary findings show over 50 suspicious transactions linked to fraud reported in Bengaluru, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Odisha.

Writing lyrics far from frivolous: Kaikini

PRANATI A S
BENGALURU, DHNS



Writer Jayant Kaikini

Kannada writer, poet and lyricist Jayant Kaikini described his interest in cinema as his greatest wealth.

He cited an iconic line from an iconic film in which Shashi Kapoor says he holds his mother above all material wealth.

Kaikini spoke at a session moderated by writer, director & editor Prashanth Pandit on Day 7 of Bengaluru International Film Festival on Tuesday. The festival concludes on Friday. He recalled watching movies at touring talkies (tent cinemas) in his hometown, Gokarna.

"I developed an interest by watching 'Katari Veera', 'Chandavalliya Thota', 'Beedi Basavanna' & 'Choori Chikkanna'," he said. Talking about 'dabba cinema', he spoke fondly about the era of cans.

"Back then, movies came as reels in cans. If a movie was bad, and there were no viewers, it remained in a can (dabba), that's where the term 'dabba film' comes from," he said.

One day, he saw reels of 'Katari Veera' being loaded onto a bus. "At Gokarna bus stand, I was devastated to see stars like Rajkumar & Udaykumar trapped in a dabba and travelling on top of a bus, not even on a seat inside," he said.

Recalling Shashi Kapoor's popular dialogue from 'Deewar', 'Mere paas maa hai', he said, "If someone asks me today what I have, I say 'mere paas cinemaa hai'".

Quoting Javed Akhtar, he said film songs were the background music of Indians' lives. "We feel sleepy when we listen to Talat Mahmood's songs because our parents used to sing them to us as lullabies," he said. "Cinema is best experienced as a community activity."

In 2006, when he watched 'Rang de Basanti' for the first time in a theatre, he enjoyed the experience. A few weeks later, when he went a second time with Kannada film director Sunil Kumar Desai, the magic was missing. "It was because the theatre was empty," he remarked.

Since cinema moved to CDs, DVDs and mobile phones, Kaikini believes, it is stripped of community essence.

"I wrote my first film song, 'Anisutide' (Mungaru Male, 2006), a romantic one, when I was 55. Nobody should suffer such a tragedy," he said, laughing.

Writing film songs is dismissed as frivolous, but it is a challenge to write words to a ready tune, he said.

"As much as 97% of our film songs are about love. What is left to write? That in itself is a challenge. Lines we cannot say to companions, wives or girlfriends, we write for two strangers in a film," he said. Writing for the 'Ponniyin Selvan' films (2022, 2023) was another challenge.

"In Tamil, love is kadal and in Kannada it is preeti, prema... The lips touch while saying it in Kannada, but in Tamil, they don't. I asked Mani Ratnam, 'how do you say love without letting lips touch'," he said. Uproarious laughter followed.

"Live intensely. Anything you experience in life becomes part of your subconscious memory and will impact your art and what you do," he said.

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Karnataka set for statewide auto-mutation rollout

Under new system, approval of revenue inspectors not required

BENGALURU, DHNS

The revenue department is rolling out a statewide 'automation' of mutation - the process to record change in land ownership - so that physical interface between officials & citizens is reduced. Mutation will be done automatically if there are no objections, revenue commissioner Meena Nagaraj has said in a directive to all deputy commissioners.

Now, there is a 7-day notice period for mutation involving registrable instruments like sale deeds and gift deeds. For a non-registrable mutation, it is 15 days. Under new system, thumb impression of the revenue inspector will not be required to approve mutation.

"In case of registrable mutation, approval will be granted automatically by the system on the 8th night. For a non-registrable mutation, approval will be done on the 16th night. So, approval by revenue inspectors will not be necessary," Nagaraj said. "But, revenue inspectors are allowed to file objections within the notice period."

The system is being piloted in Mandya and Maddur taluks. Ahead of rollout, deputy commissioners have been asked to direct their tahsildars to 'flag' all government lands and other restricted immovable assets within a week.

MEENA NAGARAJ
Revenue Commissioner

"In the case of registrable mutation, approval will be granted automatically by the system on the 8th night. For a non-registrable mutation, approval will be done on the 16th night. Therefore, approval by revenue inspectors (RIs) will not be necessary. However, RIs are allowed to file objections within the notice period.

The department has issued draft rules that seek to tighten use of powers of attorney for property registration. The draft Karnataka Registration (Amendment) Rules are up for public scrutiny.

Under draft rules, sub-registrars can refuse to register a property if a "representative, assignee or agent authorised to present the document fails to produce proof that the person who executed the power of attorney is alive."

Proof of life includes life certificate issued by magistrate, gazetted officer, post master, police sub-inspector, tahsildar, panchayat development officer or municipal commissioner. A digital life certificate generated through Aadhaar-based Face Authentication Technology System will also be accepted.

If a person who has executed power of attorney is residing outside India, his or her representative must produce a life certificate issued by a notary, any court judge, magistrate, Indian consul, vice-consul or representative of the central government.

Assembly passes resolution against VB-G Ram G by voice vote

BJP legislators tear copies of it, stage a walkout

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Assembly witnessed prolonged disorder on Wednesday. The BJP's overnight dharna demanding the resignation of Excise Minister R B Timmapur, over the alleged excise scam, continued in the House. The Speaker, however, was unable to restore order.

The BJP members continued their protest in the well of the House for the second consecutive day, shouting slogans and insisting that the minister's reply was "not satisfactory".

However, the Assembly continued with the debate on the resolution moved by the chief minister opposing the Centre's VB-G RAM G amid the din and passed it by voice vote, even as the BJP members staged a walkout late evening.

Earlier, Congress member and legal advisor to CM A S Ponnanna invoked Mahatma Gandhi and said, "The soul of India lies in its villages."

Recalling the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and enactment of the Panchayat Raj Act, he said the UPA government had strengthened Gram Swaraj through MGNREGA in 2005, but BJP shattered Gandhi's dream.

Ponnanna argued that VB-G RAM G violated cooperative federalism and fiscal autonomy of states. Citing Article 282, he said, "Any grant for public purpose must respect fiscal autonomy. A centrally imposed scheme that shifts the funding pattern from 90:10 to 60:40 burdens states and goes against constitutional principles". He also referred to Supreme Court judgments to stress collaborative federalism.

Rural development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge defended MGNREGA as a globally recognised programme."This government is called the 'Guarantee Sarkar'. The MGNREGA guaranteed dignity, minimum wages and employment in villages," he said, citing 156 crore job cards nationally and over 81 lakh in Karnataka. "The UN, ILO and even the union government have acknowledged its success, especially in women's empowerment and during Covid," he said.

Kharge accused the Centre of "name-changing politics". "You can rename schemes, but undoing the world's best job guarantee programme is unacceptable. Panchayats would be reduced to implementing agencies. This is financial terrorism on states," he said and added that the people would force the Centre to withdraw the law, "just as they did with the farm laws."

During the debate, BJP leader Arvind Bellad raised a point of order claiming that the debate had exceeded five hours.

However, Speaker U T Khader ruled that the duration was his prerogative.Amid continued disorder, the House passed the resolution (after 6 hours and 51 minutes of debate), following which the BJP legislators tore copies of it and walked out.

House in chaos

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka said the party had staged an all-night dharna and accused the Chair of not addressing the Opposition's grievances.

He said the Speaker failed to keep the House in order following a flare-up between Congress MLA Shivalinge Gowda and BJP member Sharanu Salagar over the resolution.

BJP leader Sunil Kumar objected to the Speaker's "silence" in the face of "unparliamentary language" used by Gowda. "If provocation gives members the liberty to say anything in response, we should have said so many things in this House," Kumar said, demanding an apology and expunging of the remarks.

Gowda said he had been provoked during his speech and had "lost his cool". Despite appeals from the Chair for both sides to express regret, neither did. Ashoka said that personal remarks made in the House could not be glossed over.

Passed in Council

Amid walkout by BJP and Janata Dal (Secular), the Council, late on Wednesday night, passed a resolution urging the Centre to re-introduce MGNREGA programme.

ALL EARS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar were all ears during the Legislative Assembly proceedings on Wednesday.

Govt thick-skinned, Speaker partisan, say Oppn leaders

Bribes of Rs 6K cr in excise dept diverted for polls in 5 states: Ashoka

BENGALURU, DHNS

The BJP and JD(S) on Wednesday criticised the government and Speaker U T Khader after the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution on the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) amid pandemonium.

Members of the two parties, who held an all-night dharna on Tuesday demanding the resignation of the excise minister over the excise scam, continued to protest in the Well, before staging a walkout opposing the resolution on VB-G RAM G moved by the chief minister.

"This dharna will not end here. This is a looting government and we will hold protests across the state," leader of the Opposition R Ashoka told reporters.

Accusing the Speaker of partisan conduct, he said, "He had no courtesy towards the Opposition. We have always cooperated, but he did not show consideration as we staged a dharna the whole day".

R ASHOKA
Opposition leader

"The Speaker has no courtesy towards the Opposition. We have always cooperated, but he did not show consideration as we staged a dharna the whole day".

JD(S) legislature party leader Suresh Babu said the government had "stumbled at every step" and repeatedly insulted the governor. On the excise scam, he said, "When we raised it, the government dismissed it."

The leaders alleged that the dignity of the Chair was undermined.

"He was laughing when personal remarks were made against our members," Ashoka said, alleging that the Rs 6,000 crore collected as bribes in the excise department was being "diverted for the upcoming Assembly elections in five states".

"Taxpayers' money is being siphoned off and used for polls. Funds embezzled in the Valmiki corporation were spent during elections in Telangana," the LoP said.

JD(S) legislature party leader Suresh Babu said the government had "stumbled at every step" and repeatedly insulted the governor.

On the excise scam, he said, "When we raised it, the government dismissed it, saying 'everyone has done it'. That shows how seriously they take corruption".

"There is a department-wise 'habba' of collection to divert funds to other states," he said.

Former Home Minister Araga Jnanendra termed the resolution "condemnable".

"Two days of the legislature's time was wasted, squandering taxpayers' money. If the government had objections, it could have approached the Supreme Court. Instead, it is pushing a political agenda and issuing advertisements at public cost," he said.

BJP's Arvind Bellad said, "Programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan were launched under Atal Behari Vajpayee as PM and later the Manmohan Singh government reduced the Centre's share from 85% to 50%. The same happened with the National Health Mission. It is standard practice for the Centre to initially encourage new schemes with more funding," he said.

The leaders accused the government of being "thick-skinned" for refusing to accept responsibility.

Chairman suspends C T Ravi from Council

BENGALURU, DHNS: Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti on Wednesday suspended senior BJP MLC C T Ravi after he didn't turn up to apologise for his remarks against Congress MLC Naseer Ahmed on the floor of the house, despite being called by the chair.

Earlier, Horatti gave 8 pm deadline for Ravi to be present in the House and apologise for his remarks. The suspension came following the absence of the member.

The decision was announced late on Wednesday night based on a petition given by the Congress, which also moved a resolution in the House seeking Ravi's suspension. "The suspension will be in place for a day. I had given him time till 8 pm. As he did not turn up I am suspending him for a day," Horatti announced. However, Wednesday was the last day of the session.

Before giving the ruling, Horatti gave 15 minutes time for Ravi to appear in the House. "He is not here. I will ask him and announce his decision as he is aware about the notice." After 20 minutes, the Congress members demanded action against Ravi. Horatti then asked the Chief Whip N Ravikumar to summon him to the House.

On Tuesday, Ravi had said, "The tongue which passed a remark against prime minister of this Country could not be of Indian."

Another remark by him was expunged from the records later. This was during the protest staged by the BJP members demanding apology from Congress MLC Naseer Ahmed who passed am uncharitable remark against the PM on Monday. Following the request by the chair, Naseer expressed regret on Tuesday. However, the efforts to convince Ravi to apologise went in vein as he defended his statement.

The Congress petitioned the Chairman on Wednesday seeking Ravi's suspension. Later, the House Leader N S Boseraju also moved a resolution in the House seeking suspension of Ravi.

Horatti angry at Ahmed

Horatti also took exception to CM's Political Secretary Nazeer Ahmed's repeated intervention to seek Ravi's suspension.

Meeting of Congress Dalit leaders

BENGALURU, DHNS: More than 20 SC/ST lawmakers in Congress, including Home Minister G Parameshwara, held a meeting late on Tuesday night, which generated buzz in the political circles.

He said the meeting discussed the upcoming Budget and the programmes to be formulated for the SC/ST communities. There was talk that they discussed reviving the 'Dalit CM' demand. However, Minister Muniyappa said the topic was not discussed in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Lingayat lawmakers also held a meeting to discuss their community's interests, Minister M B Patil said.

Chaos mars Council proceedings

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Legislative Council hailed as the House of elders and intellectuals, witnessed chaos, unnecessary debates, usage of unparliamentary words and even personal attacks during the 10 days' session that concluded on Wednesday.

The House hardly transacted with business lasting around 18 hours. The house time was wasted in protests and unnecessary debates and personal attacks. In the first few days, it was demanding action against Congress MLC B K Hariprasad for allegedly 'gheraoing' Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot after addressing the joint session of the Legislature.

Then, it was against the comment passed by another Congress legislator Naseer Ahmed against the PM, and then, against C T Ravi for his indirect remarks against Naseer.

Several members and even the Chairman Basavaraj Horatti expressed displeasure. He said, "In 45 years of my experience, I am seeing such behaviour by the members now."

Deputy Chairman M K Pranesh said, "When no one listens to the chair, what can the chair do?" Senior Congress MLC Puttanna stated, "We are ashamed to come live and I brought a blanket to cover myself and sit."

BJP MLC Y M Satish stated, "In the 10 days we have not done anything. It is a complete washout."

Timmapur stands ground, says won't quit

BENGALURU, DHNS: Excise Minister R B Timmapur on Wednesday maintained that he would not quit and termed the Opposition's corruption allegations against him as "false and a political conspiracy".

Earlier in the day, Timmapur met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and held talks.

"Can we run the government if resignations are tendered as and when the Opposition demands? They ask for everyone's resignation, even that of the CM's. Should everyone resign? What's the evidence? I won't allow them to defame the government as part of a political conspiracy," Timmapur said.

The Opposition BJP and the JD(S) has demanded Timmapur's resignation citing "large-scale" corruption in the Excise department over transfer of officials and liquor licensing. The Opposition staged an all-night protest, spending all of Tuesday night inside the Assembly.

"Nothing has happened. There is no question of me resigning. I have not done any such wrong thing. There is no evidence for the allegations," Timmapur insisted.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar also backed Timmapur. "The BJP is trying to trouble a Dalit minister by demanding his resignation," he said. "There's no evidence. They [BJP] have no issues, so they've created all fake ones," Shivakumar, who is the Karnataka Congress president, said.

Shivakumar charged that the Opposition did not want a discussion on MGNREGA, which has been repealed by the union government. "That's why they're doing some drama," he said.

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PERSONAL

Announcements

ANNOUNCEMENT
I, Soumya Rachel Rajukutty, R/at #3, Eden Rock Layout, Athma Vidya Nagar, 1st A Main, Doddagubbi Main Road, Bangalore-77, declare that my name is mentioned as Soumya R Rajukutty in my daughter Chesed Samuel's birth certificate. Both names, Soumya R Rajukutty and Soumya Rachel Rajukutty, refer to the same person. Affidavit dtd: 03-02-2026 Notary P. Sharada, Bangalore.

ANNOUNCEMENT
I, Samuel Ebenezer James, R/at #3, Eden Rock Layout, Athma Vidya Nagar, 1st A Main, Doddagubbi Main Road, Bangalore-77, declare that my name is mentioned as Samuel E James in my daughter Chesed Samuel's birth certificate. Both names, Samuel E James and Samuel Ebenezer James, refer to the same person. Affidavit dtd: 03-02-2026 Notary P. Sharada, Bangalore.

Change of Name

I YALLAPPA
HUCHCHELLAPPA #32, Kmmasandra Agrahara, Sidihoskote, Anekal, Bengaluru- 562106, have changed my name to ABC YALLAPPA H vide affidavit dated- 03/02/2026

I, SURAVARAPU RAVIKUMAR, aged about 26 years, S/o S. Paparao, R/at No. 13/229/1, Gopala Krishna House, Sommaiah Street, Railway Station Road, Kuppam, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh- 517425, have changed my name from SURAVARAPU RAVIKUMAR to MOHAMMED RAFIQ and embraced Islam, vide affidavit dated 3/2/2026 sworn to before C.V Earappa Notary Bangalore

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CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
Replacement Works
The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, General, Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procurement website www.ireps.gov.in from reputed experienced & Licensed Electrical contractors for the following works. Tender No. SUR/L/T/2025/32, Name of work: Replacement of cables run below COP/FOB on real insulator on station by bus bar trunking system at various stations over Solapur Division. Estimated cost: ₹ 1,95,61,423.35. Bid Security: ₹ 2,47,800.00, Completion period: 24 months. Validity of offer: 60 Days. Date & time of tenders closing on website: 20.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs. Bid Security cost shall be paid through e-payment on www.ireps.gov.in website. EXP-04
Download UTS App for Tickets

SIGNAL AND TELECOM WORKS AT KATIHAR DIVISION
E-Tender Notice No. KIR-N-2025-K-71 Dated: 02-02-2026. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: Signal and telecom work for Yard Improvement-Rangapani, Gaisal, Panjipara and Kishanganj Yard. Tender Value: ₹2,70,71,039/-. Earnest Money: ₹2,85,400/-. Date & Time of closing of tender: At 15.00 hrs. & opening at 15.30 hrs. on 25-02-2026. The complete information of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. on 25-02-2026 in website www.ireps.gov.in
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NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Publication of Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/133/2025 dated 29.07.2025
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Auction for the following work.

Sl.No.	Item of Work	Approx.Value
1.	RFP for Construction of New Broad Gauge line including Electrical, Signal & Telecommunication works between Jumlapur Road (Excl) Ch: 75400 and Gurgunta(incl) Ch: 134950 (59.55 km) under GADAG-WADI New line Project on EPC Mode.. (Tender Ref. No. JUMLAPUR- GURGUNTA-EPC)	Rs. 964,51,54,197/-

Date of Closing	
Existing	Modified
12.02.2026 (15.00 Hrs.)	17.03.2026 (15.00 Hrs.)

For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/Works, Bengaluru Cantonment
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S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer/Chakradharpur acting for & on behalf of the President of India invites e-Tenders against Tender No. mentioned below due to open on 24.02.2026 at 15:00 hrs. Sl. No.; Tender Notice No.; Name of Work; Tender Value & Earnest Money respectively : (1); ST-CKP-OT-25-26-112; S&T work in connection with TTR(TWS)-248 sets in Dangoaposi-Jaroli Sections; ₹ 5,01,57,459.01; ₹ 4,00,800.00. (2); ST-CKP-OT-25-26-113; S&T work in connection with TTR(TWS)-248 sets in Padapahar-Bolani Khadan-Gua Sections; ₹ 4,49,19,181.54; ₹ 3,74,600.00. Completion Period: 18 (Eighteen) Months (for Sl. No. 1 & 2); The tender details can be viewed at Web site http://www.ireps.gov.in (for Sl. No. 1 & 2); The tenderer/bidders must have Class III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate in e-Tendering. e-Tender forms shall be issued free of cost (for Sl. No. 1 & 2); Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored (for Sl. No. 1 & 2). (PR-1142)

MIN. OF DEFENCE
(DRDO)
NAVAL MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORY,
Shil Badlapur Road, P.O. Anandnagar
AMBERNATH-421 506, Dist THANE
(PHONE : 0251 2623079, 202, 039 / FAX 0251 2623004)
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE
The Director, NMRL, Addl. Ambernath, on behalf of the President of India, invites Expression of Interest to procure the following item.

Sl. No	Reference No	Nomenclature of item
1	NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/PSTD/124/2025-2026 Dated 30-01-2026	Development of Anion Exchange Membrance Water Electrolyser indigenously

1. Preamble:
1.1 The Director, Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL), Ambernath, a Premier laboratory under Defense R&D organization, on behalf of President of India invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from Indian -Industries having sufficient experience, expertise and capacity to undertake the job of Development of Anion Exchange Membrane Water electrolyser (AEMWE) indigenously.
1.2 Brief introduction of EOI: There is a need to have a development partner for development of AEMWE indigenously.
1.3 The objective of this EOI is to shortlist technically suitable and competent applicants having in-depth knowledge and proven track record of having successfully executed same or similar kind of contracts. Applicants should be willing to execute the said contract, subject to fulfilling the eligibility criteria laid out as per Annexure-1.
1.4 The interested firms may submit their interest with requisite documents through online mode on Defproc portal (defproc.gov.in) with compliance statement (format attached herewith in Annexure-1) within 30 days from date of publishing this EOI. The large size document may be submitted offline also.
1.5 Any information/clarification regarding this subject matter can be obtained from:
Dr Swati S. Rao, Sc-F, NMRL
DRDO, Ministry of Defense,
MIDC, Shil -Badlapur Road, Ambernath, Thane, Maharashtra-421506
Contact No. (0251)26230147, Email: swati.nmrl@gov.in, mmg.nmrl@gov.in
NOTE : 1. Documents are available on Defproc Portal (defproc.gov.in) against NMRL Ref. No. NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/PSTD/124/2025-2026 Dated 30/01/2026 and relevant forms at Part 1 & Part 2 are available against reference Ref. No.NMRL/MMG/0401/04/EOI/PSTD/124 / 2025-2026 Dated 30/01/2026 may be downloaded for participating in the Expression of Interest process.
CBC 10301-11-0172-2526

Karnataka backwardness report stokes concerns, stirs policy debate

Backwardness exists in 177 taluks, says Rao panel

BENGALURU, DHNS

The latest assessment of backwardness in Karnataka has led to a debate among policy experts amid concerns that developmental deficits have not been adequately met despite the government spending Rs 32,600 crore to fight regional imbalances.

Out of 236 taluks in the state, the Karnataka Regional Imbalances Redressal Committee, headed by economist M Govinda Rao, has categorised 59 as 'most backward', 59 as 'more backward', 59 as 'backward' and the remaining 59 as 'developed'. This means there is backwardness in 75% of all taluks.

In 2002, the DM Nanjundappa committee had identified backwardness in 118 out of 175 taluks. Based on its recommendations, the government spent Rs 32,610.24 crore from 2007-08 to 2022-23 to fight regional imbalance.

"75% of taluks in the state are backward? What is needed is a Regional Imbalances Correction Initiative that implements the various recommendations (and) measures progress publicly," social entrepreneur Ashwin Mahesh said.

> **L K ATHEEQ**
> IAS officer (retd)
>
> "It doesn't mean that the backward taluks of the Nanjundappa committee haven't achieved progress over the years. There is progress, but the divergence is large, and taluks in the Kalyana Karnataka and North Karnataka regions have lagged.

Mahesh said he has been working on a District Development Dashboard that ministers can use. "Such public engagement with public problems is needed everywhere. The (government), on its own, can do a few things, but that is not enough to overcome such large deficits in development. Concerted action across state, market and society is needed," he said.

Retired IAS officer L K Atheeq, a member of the Rao committee, said it is "provocative" to say that 75% of taluks in the state are backward.

The Nanjundappa and Rao committees followed different frameworks and methodologies, Atheeq said. "... therefore, the results are not comparable. Development is a continuous process and all taluks have progressed. The Rao committee has made this very clear in its report," he said.

Atheeq said the Rao committee divided taluks into four quartiles - the bottom three being 'most backward', 'more backward' and 'backward'.

"It doesn't mean that the backward taluks of the Nanjundappa committee haven't achieved progress over the years. There is progress, but the divergence is large and taluks in the Kalyana Karnataka and North Karnataka regions have lagged behind," he said.

Atheeq said the Rao commission "could have put a cut-off at the middle" and showed 50% of taluks as backward.

"However, it was not done because most taluks require attention... On a sliding scale, 25% taluks need most attention, 25% need attention, but at a lower scale than the first 25% and so on," he said, adding: "It is now up to the government to allocate more resources depending on the degree of relative backwardness."

SAKSHAM 2026 to focus on energy efficiency, conservation

K H Muniyappa lights a lamp to inaugurate SAKSHAM 2026 in the presence of (left to right) Siddharth Agarwal, C H Vinod, Jose Thomas and Sayantan Sam.

The oil and gas industry launched its flagship national energy conservation awareness campaign Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav (SAKSHAM) 2026 recently. The campaign was inaugurated by K H Muniyappa, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Government of Karnataka, at Bengaluru.

Senior officials from the oil and gas sector attended the event. Siddharth Agarwal, Executive Director and Sayantan Sam, General Manager, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd; Jose Thomas, Chief General Manager, GAIL India Ltd; M Sandeep Reddy, General Manager (Retail), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd; and C H Vinod, Head - Gas Strategic Business Unit (South), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd were among the dignitaries present.

Speaking on the occasion, Muniyappa said energy conservation is vital for sustainable development, energy security and environmental protection, while Siddharth Agarwal stated it is not only about saving oil and gas but also about protecting the environment and reducing pollution.

As part of SAKSHAM 2026, in Karnataka, a wide range of public outreach and capacity-building activities will be undertaken, including fuel-efficient driving contests, cycle rallies, quizzes in schools and colleges, and conservation awareness sessions.

Curated by DH Brandspot

12 sentenced to 5-year RI for parading woman naked

BELAGAVI, DHNS: The 10th Additional District and Sessions Court has convicted 12 individuals, including six women, to five years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) for assaulting a woman from a Scheduled Tribe and parading her naked at Hosa Vantmuri village on December 10-11, 2023.

Those convicted include Basappa Rudrappa Nayak, Raju Rudrappa Nayak, Kempanna Raju Nayak, and others.

The incident occurred following a familial dispute after the victim's son eloped with the daughter of one of the accused. In response, the group violently attacked the woman, drawing national attention to the case during the Karnataka Legislature's winter session.

Following the victim's complaint, an FIR was registered at Kakati police station on December 11, 2023, listing numerous charges under the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Destruction and Loss of Property Act.

The investigation was taken over by the Crime Investigation Department (CID) on December 16, 2023, leading to a chargesheet filed on April 22, 2024, with 92 witnesses and 37 evidentiary items.

Due to the severity of the crime, the High Court ordered the trial to conclude within a year.

Judge H S Manjunath delivered the verdict, and the prosecution was represented by Special Public Prosecutor L S Sullad.

CALL OF THE CLAIRVOYANT

Over five lakh devotees from Karnataka and neighbouring states congregate as the Goravayya utters Karnika (prophecy) at Mailara jatre, near Hadagali in Vijayanagara district on Wednesday. The Karnika uttered by the Goravayya - sampayitaley parak - is being interpreted as a joyful year ahead with bountiful rain and good yield.. DH PHOTO/LAVA K

No Modi speech as ruling party...

Parliament, from Page 1

During the commotion during the day, some BJP women MPs were seen approaching the Opposition MPs standing near the PM's seat. Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnav, as well as BJP MP Anurag Thakur tried to defuse the situation and urged the Treasury Bench members to walk away.

Congress MP Deepender Hooda then came forward to stop the matter from escalating.

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari accused the Opposition's protest in the Well of the House as a "well thought out plan". "You will be shocked to see what happened in the House today. For the first time, members crossed the Well towards the Treasury Benches, and in a pre-planned manner put the women MPs in front to carry out this malpractice," he told reporters later.

Samajwadi Party MP Dimple Yadav said the Opposition was waiting for the PM to speak.

"We want the House to function and all MPs to express their views, but the Leader of the Opposition and other MPs are not being allowed to speak. We have a lot of issues to raise with the PM but he did not speak at all," she said.

It is not clear whether the PM will deliver his Lok Sabha speech on Thursday. He is scheduled to speak in the Rajya Sabha on the same day.

Outside Parliament, Congress MPs demonstrated demanding Rahul be allowed to speak on the President's address.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra told reporters outside Parliament that while Rahul was not allowed to quote from a book, Dubey was.

"The LoP brought a published book; he brought it online and he is not allowed to quote from it, but this maharaj (Dubey) is. Is that fair?" Priyanka said.

SIR row: Election commission targetting West Bengal, says Mamata

Mamata, from Page 1

The CM claimed that micro-observers can delete all names sitting in the office and those deleted have not been allowed to file Form 6.

"Lakhs of people were deleted, and so many people who are alive were declared dead," she claimed. She said that 58 lakh names were deleted in the first phase of SIR, and the same had 'no scope' to appeal. "In the second phase, 1.30 crore were deleted. What is the system they are maintaining in other states? They are only targeting West Bengal," she said.

Banerjee said the logical discrepancy cases should not be deleted from the electoral rolls and should be cleared by the DO or the ERO, not by the micro-observer.

The bench sought the list of officers who can be spared, and once the officers are made available, then a micro-observer may not be required.

Her plea sought online publication of Form 7 recipients to prevent bulk deletions, empowerment of local electoral registration officers (EROs) to decide inter-state migration cases after five days, and the removal of micro-observers from the verification process—or at the very least, a bar on their participation in hearings and field verifications.

"Suppose a daughter goes to her in-laws' house after marriage, then the question is asked why she is using her husband's title, and that is also (declared) a mismatch," she said.

She claimed that even the names of some poor people who had shifted were deleted in the name of 'logical discrepancy'.

The EC, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, sought to counter Banerjee's charges and said the Bengal government had provided services of only 80 grade-two officers, like SDMs, for overseeing the SIR process.

The bench said, Banerjee's plea was genuine and every issue has a solution and no innocent person would be left out.

The court issued a notice to the EC on Banerjee's petition and fixed the matter for consideration on Monday.

Sources said she is likely to appear on Monday to argue her plea.

Pay more for metro rides...

Metro fare, from Page 1

While the BMRCL pushed for a 6% annual automatic hike, the committee capped it at 5%. The fare hike is determined by a transparent formula, or 5% per annum, whichever is lower, and will remain valid until the next FFC submits its report.

Independent mobility expert Satya Arikutharam criticised the hike as "absolutely unfair". "Delhi Metro's 4th FFC also recommended annual fare increases in 2017, but fares were not raised until 2025, that too only modestly. Delhi Metro fares are still lower than Bengaluru's," he stated.

Prakash Mandoth of Bangalore Metro and Suburban Rail Passengers' Association said the hike should apply only to token users, while passengers paying via smartcards and QR codes should be exempted.

Find permanent solution for man-wildlife conflict in K'taka: HDK to min

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H D Kumaraswamy on Wednesday met Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, and requested him to find permanent solutions to end the man-wildlife conflict in Karnataka.

During the interaction, Kumaraswamy expressed serious concern over the increasing incidents of elephant attacks across several districts, including Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, and Shivamogga, a statement said.

He pointed out that persistent wildlife incursions have resulted in the loss of human lives, particularly among farmers cultivating land along forest fringes and those engaged in livestock rearing. Several people have also sustained severe injuries, leading to permanent disabilities, the JD(S) leader apprised.

Responding positively to these concerns, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav assured that the matter would be attended to on a priority basis.

The Union Environment minister further instructed concerned officials to submit a comprehensive report on the issue before the conclusion of the ongoing Budget Session of the Parliament, the statement said.

Kumaraswamy said he also met Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil and discussed state's pending irrigation-related issues. During meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Kumaraswamy said issues related to steel industry development were discussed.

Int'l Trade Fair for farmers from tomorrow

BENGALURU, DHNS: The International Trade Fair 2026 will be held for three days starting February 6 at Palace Grounds, Agriculture Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy said on Wednesday.

The fair is aimed at promoting organic farming, millet farming and for farmers to go beyond farming and brand their produce.

This year, the department has introduced 'Krishi Panditha Prashasthi' and 'Krishi Prashasthi' to recognise and honour expert farmers who are making immense contribution to the farming community and to farmers who have achieved the highest yield in selected crops in state, district and taluk levels.

Overall, 122 farmers - 18 with 'Krishi Panditha Prashasthi' and 104 with 'Krishi Prashasthi', will be presented awards. For the first time, value addition and processing technologies from premier institutes of the country will be showcased to help farmers adopt newer technologies.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and DCM D K Shivakumar will inaugurate the fair, the minister added.

Low water table: Project aims to direct streams into borewells

Borewells, from Page 1

"We drilled two borewells on the riverbank and allowed floodwater to naturally flow into the tubes to recharge the aquifer," Patil said, adding that the impact of recharging was observed up to 2 km from the borewells.

Unlike rainwater harvesting or soak pits, which allow infiltration at a slow pace, MAR enables groundwater recharge at a much faster rate and in larger quantities.

Water expert Veena Srinivasan said the success of MAR depends on several factors, including the availability of excess water and effective prevention of silt accumulation. "The most sustainable way to improve groundwater levels is by adopting cropping patterns that retain soil moisture and allow rainwater to infiltrate naturally and recharge aquifers," she said.

Water conservation expert S Vishwanath said MAR is a scientifically proven method to improve groundwater tables.

"The method does not adversely affect the environment as it relies on monsoon flows and not summer water," he said.

However, he cautioned that implementation is complex and requires a thorough understanding of regional geology, aquifer characteristics, rainfall patterns and availability of surplus water.

He said the biggest challenge is preventing silt and impurities from entering injection borewells, as clogging could defeat the purpose of the project.

सीएसआईआर - राष्ट्रीय वांतरिक्ष प्रयोगशालाएं
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ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
E-PROCUREMENT OF KARNATAKA
ಮಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾನಗರಪಾಲಿಕೆಯ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ನಿಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುವ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಈ ಕಛೇರಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: DMA/2025-26/WORK INDENT NO.52453, 54874, 52487 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. 3 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಒಟ್ಟು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂಪಾಯಿ 399.17 4 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 24–02–2026 ಅಪರಾಹ್ನ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರವನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ kppp.karnataka.gov.in ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.
ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಮಹಾನಗರಪಾಲಿಕೆ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು
DIPR/DK/KSMCA/1518/25-26 dt: 04.02.2026

SDS TRC AND RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE OF CHEST DISEASES
(An Autonomous Institute, Government of Karnataka)
(Reg. No. SOR/BLU/DR/671/09-10 Dtd: 23.09.2009)
(Superspeciality Referral Hospital & Post Graduate Institute)
Someshwaranagara 1st Main Road, Dharmaram College Post,
(Near NIMHANS), Bangalore - 560 029. Ph: 080-26088500/501
E-mail : sdstbrgicd@gmail.com / director.rgicd@gmail.com
No. SDS/TND/BIPAP/ESU/RB/PUM/FC(16)-2025-26 Date:03.02.2026
Tender Notification
Tenders are invited through e-procurement-2 for the purchase of 1. PORTABLE BIPAP MACHINE 2.ELECTRO SURGICAL UNIT 3.RIGID BRONCHOSCOPE 4.PORTABLE ULTRASOUND MACHINE WITH ECHO PROBE 5.HD CAMERA SYSTEM THORACOSCOPY 6.C-PET 7. ETCO2 8.BOYLES APPARATUS 9.ANESTHESIA WORKSTATION 10.PARKING Tender Document is available in KPPP Portal.
Sd/-
Director
DIPR/CP/5411/Zen/2025-26

University of Mysore
Viswavidyanilaya Karya Soudha, Crawford Hall, Post Box No.406
Mysore-570 005-570 005. Phone.: 2419222/2419361
E-mail: registrar@uni-mysore.ac.in Website: www.uni-mysore.ac.in
No. GL6/190/2023-24 Date : 03.02.2026
Tender Notification
(Through Karnataka Government e-procurement portal only)
The Registrar. University of Mysore, Mysuru invites tenders for Providing & supplying Medicines to Health centers University of Mysore. Mysuru under annual rate contract for one year from the date of contract as per KTPP act 2000 through e-procurement portal of Government of Karnataka. The last date for submission of tender is 19.02.2026 up to 4:00 pm. The Tender Indent Number: UOM/2025-26/IND0063 details can be obtained in e-procurement website http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
Note:-Details of terms and conditions are uploaded in e-procurement portal. For further details please contact Telephone No:0821-2419222/361
Sd/- Registrar
University of Mysore
DIPR/MYS/1606/SA/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ. ಸೊಸೈಟಿ
ಉತ್ತರ–ಕನ್ನಡ, ಕಾರವಾರ–581301 ಫೋನಂ: 08382–222351
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: NHM/NPCB/53/25-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 03–02–2026
ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ವಿಷಯ: ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂಧತ್ವ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಕ್ಕೆ ಕನ್ನಡಕಗಳ ಖರೀದಿಗಾಗಿ ಇ–ಪ್ರೋಕ್ಯುರಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಕುರಿತು.
ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಕಾಣಿಸಿದ ವಿಷಯದನ್ವಯ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಂಧತ್ವ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣ ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಕನ್ನಡಕಗಳ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆಯಿದ್ದು ಇಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ಇ–ಪ್ರೋಕ್ಯುರಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಸಂದರ್ಶಿಸುವದು ಇಲ್ಲವೇ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಅಂಧತ್ವ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣ ವಿಭಾಗ ಕಾರವಾರ ಕಚೇರಿಯನ್ನು ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.
ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮಾಹಿತಿ: ವಿವರಗಳು: (1) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: ದಿ: 04–02–2026 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 10:00 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕುರಿತು ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: ದಿ: 11–02–2026 ಸಂಜೆ 05–30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: ದಿ: 19–02–2026 ಸಂಜೆ 05–30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: ದಿ: 21–02–2026ರ ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (5) ಟೆಂಡರಿನ ಮೊತ್ತ: ರೂ. 52,67,196/–, ಇ ಎಂ ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ: ರೂ.1,05,358/–, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ಸ್ಥಳ: ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆ.ಕು.ಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ, ಕಾರವಾರ.
ಸಹಿ/– ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ, ಕಾರವಾರ.
DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/1045/25-26 Dt.04.02.2026

GTTC
GOVT. TOOL ROOM & TRAINING CENTRE
Rajajinagar Industrial Estate, Bengaluru-560010. Ph: 080-23157189,
Fax: 080-23301683, e-Mail:gttc.projects@karnataka.gov.in
Website:https://gttc.karnataka.gov.in
No: GTTC/PROJ/CIVIL-ELE/WORKS/BD-157,158/2025-26 Date: 04.02.2026
e-TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tenders for the following works have been invited through e-procurement by Government Tool Room and Training Centre.

Sl. No.	Bid No.	Centre Name	Name of Work
1	157	Madhugiri	Establishment of new GTTC Centre at Madhugiri, Tumakuru District.
2	158	Sindhanur	Establishment of new GTTC Centre at Sindhanur, Raichur District.

Tender documents will be available on the e-portal from 06.02.2026 and Pre-bid meeting is scheduled on 20.02.2026. The last date for submission of tender in the e-portal is 09.03.2026 before 5:30 PM. For more details, please visit the e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact the helpline number: +91 9240214000, +91 9240214001.
Sd /-Managing Director

DECCAN HERALD
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Memoir row: A question of answers

Several questions have been raised about the excerpts from former Army chief General M M Naravane's unpublished memoir, *Four Stars of Destiny*. There is no clarity on why the book, submitted to the government for review, is still awaiting clearance. The Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, was denied permission to quote from the book in the Lok Sabha. Eight MPs were suspended from the House over the disruption that ensued. At the centre of the controversy is the manner in which the book captures an alleged conversation between the author and the government's leadership in 2020 amid a Chinese incursion on the LAC. According to the excerpts, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh – after speaking with Prime Minister Narendra Modi – told the Army chief that the response can be an entirely "military decision": the General was allegedly asked to do whatever he deemed appropriate.

It is for the government to clarify the delayed go-ahead for the book, written by a distinguished general. If it has found some of the content objectionable, those concerns should have been conveyed to the author. Former military leaders and bureaucrats have written books centred on their professional lives. Gen Naravane should not be denied that right without reason. Rahul Gandhi has the right to raise the matter, which is of public interest, in the Lok Sabha. The Speaker denied him permission to speak, citing rules that restricted members from quoting material not connected with the business of the House. But it has been observed that members of the House could quote from sources if they attest to the authenticity of the quoted text.

Amid a political face-off, the government's silence deepens questions on the controversial excerpts

Critically, there has been no official word on the alleged conversation around the military response. If the exchange did happen, it amounts to the leadership of the government, including the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister, being evasive on a crucial decision relating to national security. India's military has always functioned under the elected civilian government, which holds the responsibility to guide the military leadership on strategic matters. In a democracy, any decision involving a conflict with another country cannot be taken entirely on military considerations. The Prime Minister should disclose whether the conversation took place, and if it did not, Gen Naravane should be held accountable for making the "allegation". Calling Rahul Gandhi or others who demand a response from the government anti-national aligns with a familiar pattern of deflection and outrage. It only furthers political interests and adds credence to questions regarding the alleged political directions taken during a national crisis.

Bridging the governance deficit

The Karnataka Regional Imbalances Redressal Committee, headed by economist M Govinda Rao, has delivered a damning diagnosis of the state's development model. After spending Rs 32,610 crore over 15 years to correct regional disparities, Karnataka today has more backward taluks than before – 177 out of 236. This is not merely a policy failure; it is an indictment of political and administrative incompetence. The disparities are stark and indefensible. Bengaluru Urban's per capita income is nearly five times that of Kalaburagi. While the capital boasts of prosperity and opportunity, vast swathes of North Karnataka remain trapped in structural deprivation. The state's growth has been spectacular, the report notes, but its benefits have been hoarded by a handful of districts.

This verdict is particularly embarrassing because Karnataka is no stranger to expert advice. The Nanjundappa Committee report of 2002 had already mapped backwardness and proposed a Special Development Plan. Kalyana Karnataka was later granted constitutional backing under Article 371J, promising equitable funding, institutional focus, and reservations in education and employment. Yet, two decades later, the Govinda Rao Committee finds that backwardness has deepened.

The conclusion is unavoidable: interventions failed not for a shortage of money or legal cover, but for lack of seriousness. Politicians across parties have treated regional development as a slogan, not a mission. Funds were channelled into visible civil works that offered quick political dividends. Human capital was neglected. Schools without teachers and hospitals without doctors became the norm. Filling vacancies or building local economic ecosystems required sustained effort and political courage; awarding contracts required neither. The bureaucracy fared no better. Development boards degenerated into spending agencies with no strategic vision, little monitoring, and minimal accountability.

Regional disparities in Karnataka warrant an urgent switch to outcome-driven development models

Crucially, the Committee shifts the conversation from expenditure to outcomes. Its proposed Rs-43,914 crore outlay between 2026 and 2031 is tied to per capita income, market access, skill development, and private investment – metrics that actually determine prosperity. It also recognises a hard truth: the government alone cannot deliver development. Regions must be enabled to attract enterprise, retain talent, and build on local strengths. Karnataka must discard symbolic spending and ceremonial schemes, and confront the governance deficit that has kept North Karnataka poor amid plenty. The report offers a roadmap. What remains to be seen is whether the political class has the will to follow it.

TECH FOR GOOD

AI can make India's social security portable

The promise is of efficient tracking, ensuring contributions and benefits can move with the worker across districts and states

UTTAM PRAKASH, SRINIVAS JOSYULA AND JAY VERDHAN TIWARI

The operationalisation of the Social Security Code, followed by draft rules placed in the public domain, marks a clear statement of intent in how India seeks to safeguard its workforce. By bringing gig workers, platform labourers and the unorganised sector under a single framework, the law recognises how work actually happens today and places the worker, not the contract, at the centre of policy. The intent is unambiguous. The task now is delivery: converting this opportunity into protection that workers can see, access, and rely on.

The scale of that task is evident. Nearly 90% of India's workforce continues to operate in informal employment arrangements. At the same time, social security coverage has expanded steadily over the past decade, rising from about 19% of the population in 2014 to nearly 64% today, according to ILOSTAT's SDG indicators. In absolute terms, this translates to roughly 94 crore beneficiaries, placing India among the world's largest social security systems. These figures point to institutional capacity already operating at a population scale.

What gives this expansion its real significance is its operational character. Unlike survey-based estimates, India's social security architecture is anchored in live administrative systems. Organisations such as EPFO and ESIC process crores of contribution, compliance, and benefit transactions every day across establishments, sectors, and states, generating real-time records of employment, wages, and protection. Together, these systems reflect how labour markets function daily.

The availability of such live data changes what policy delivery can realistically aim for. When employment spells, wages, and contributions are recorded in real time, social security need not remain static; it can follow the worker as circumstances change. This is where the promise of the Social Security Code moves from legal design to administrative possibility. That promise must contend with the defining feature of India's labour market: mobility. Workers routinely move between employers, platforms, occupations, and states, often combining multiple forms of work within a single year. A social security system designed around the worker, rather than a single employer or occupation, aligns naturally with this reality.

Because India's administrative systems have evolved in silos, shaped by the legacy of scheme-specific delivery, worker identities and contribution histories often reset as individuals move across schemes or jurisdictions. The moment now calls for breaking this historical baggage. Instruments such as the Universal Account Number under EPFO, already extended into platforms like e-Shram, provide a foundation for continuity, allowing employment histories and entitlements to travel with the worker rather than remain confined within institutional boundaries.

Seen this way, the nature of the challenge changes. India has already demonstrated that it can scale social protection.

The design imperative now is portability: ensuring coverage, contributions, and benefits move seamlessly with the worker, without repeated administrative resets that raise transaction costs and risk exclusion.

It is at this stage that artificial intelligence becomes relevant as a governance capability. The value of AI lies not in prediction alone, but in connection. The social security administration already generates vast volumes of transactional data across states, tracking employment spells, wage bases, and contribution histories at a scale few countries can match. When systems operate independently, continuity breaks down as workers move. When they are connected intelligently, continuity becomes possible.

Embedded into routine administration, AI can help identify employment transitions, flag contribution lapses, and highlight eligibility gaps before exclusion occurs. It enables risk-based compliance by allowing inspectors to focus on patterns rather than paperwork, while improving responsiveness without increasing procedural burden. Used this way, AI strengthens institutions rather than sitting outside them.

This institutional role for AI fits naturally within India's federal structure. With labour on the Concurrent List, the Union and states are delivery partners. States remain closest to workers and employers, shaping inspections, enforcement priorities, and welfare delivery. National digital systems provide common foundations through shared identifiers and interoperable standards that allow benefits and contributions to move with workers across district and state boundaries. In practice, this strengthens State capacity without centralising control.

Proceed with caution

AI, however, is not a shortcut to universal social security. Earlier phases of digitisation offer clear lessons. The first is to avoid digitising poorly designed processes. AI layered over unclear rules or weak data will amplify existing inefficiencies. Business process redesign, clarity in rules, and data cleaning must therefore come first. The second lesson is the need to move beyond administrative silos, since AI draws its value from patterns across systems.

Sequencing matters. Initial efforts should focus on low-risk, high-impact use cases such as cleaning registries, clearing backlogs, detecting compliance gaps, and reducing repetitive administrative work. Once these basics are in place, sandboxing offers a bridge from design to scale. Platforms such as AIKosh support responsible experimentation, allowing solutions to be tested and refined before wider deployment.

Trust remains the thread that holds the system together. Employers need predictability. Workers and unions expect transparency. State governments must see national systems as enabling rather than intrusive. AI systems built with shared dashboards, common standards, and clear audit trails can reduce discretion and strengthen trust across stakeholders.

At the G20 in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated a broader vision of digital public infrastructure and AI as tools for public good, aimed at expanding access, building trust and strengthening State capacity. This vision aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals on universal social protection, decent work, and reduced inequality. For India, these commitments converge with the aspiration of Viksit Bharat, where economic growth is matched by inclusion.

The Social Security Code offers India a new promise, one that reflects how people work today across jobs, platforms, and states. Used well, AI can make governance not just efficient, but deliberately humane. Anchored in institutional strength, technology turns execution into reform. That is how India can show the way in delivering public policy at scale.

(Uttam is Regional Provident Fund Commissioner [Kochi and Lakshadweep]; Srinivas is a faculty at IIM Visakhapatnam; Jay is Scientist-E at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The real dessert by the River Seine

Crêpe Suzette was the best, even when watered-down

ARTHY MUTHANNA SINGH

When we were growing up on a tea plantation in the Nilgiris, the one thing we really, really looked forward to every day was dessert. Moreover, we were in boarding school most of the year, which meant that Food, with a capital F, was the most important thing in the world. So at home, we were treated to a plethora of variety as far as the post-dinner department was concerned by either the butler or my mother: mousses, pies, meringue, homemade vanilla cream made out of pure cream, etc. In fact, one of our butlers used to make it especially interesting by keeping dessert a secret. The excitement on the table would be almost palpable until he arrived after we had consumed the main meal and, with a flourish, *voila*, presented the dessert-of-the-day to us. Maybe it was my boarding school palate, but he was *Cordon Bleu* chef material to me.

One of the most intriguing, yet delicious, desserts that my mother would make was *crêpe Suzette*, the spelling and pronunciation of which I only figured out many years later when I chose to study French.

But what had brought this dessert to the top of my otherwise poor memory was watching the Paris Olympics. Suddenly, *crêpe Suzette* came to mind. I remembered my only visit to Paris, which had been more than enough for the fascinating city to jump right up to the top of my list of favourite cities. My local hostess had insisted on taking me to a famous old *crêperie* on Ile St Louis on the River Seine. At the *crêperie*, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that every single course of the entire meal had the *crêpe* as its base, with fillings that varied from ham and cheese to even eggs. And what did the meal end with? *Crêpe Suzette*, of course.

Apparently there are different views on how this particular *crêpe* acquired its rather exotic name. My hostess said that one theory was that a chef who had ruined a traditional dessert and had no time to make another one served the 'ruined' dessert to the king, who loved it so much that it was named after a pretty French girl who was present at that particular meal. Another theory was that it was named after a famous actress whose stage name was Suzette. Whatever the real reason, it tasted different. It was very tasty but definitely different from what I'd had until then at home. And then it hit me. No Grand Marnier (supposed to have a quarter of a cup), no *cognac*! We had been served the watered-down version earlier because 'children cannot have alcohol!' And in Paris, I finally had had the real thing. What did I do? I called my mother up to complain!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trade should strengthen competitiveness

I refer to 'US trade deal almost done; agri, dairy interests safe, says Goyal' (Feb 4). The government's assurance that sensitive sectors like agriculture and dairy will be protected is reassuring, especially given the vulnerability of millions of small farmers to global price fluctuations. Any trade agreement with the US should be evaluated based on enforceable safeguards, not just intent. Tariff reductions may boost exports in textiles, electronics, and marine products, but past experience shows gains are often uneven. Concessions made today can have long-term implications for food security, rural livelihoods, and domestic industry. India's reluctance to link trade negotiations with geopolitical pressures is pragmatic. However, trade liberalisation should strengthen competitiveness without compromising strategic and social priorities.
K V Chandramouli, Mysuru

SC should set example

Apropos 'Reserving judgment for months is an ailment: SC' (Feb 4), the apex court's observation is commendable but lacks enforcement. It serves as an advisory rather than a direction. As the highest court, it seems to hesitate on this issue, to the detriment of anxious litigants. Sometimes, a case outlives the term of culpable bureaucrats, police officers, or other functionaries, making further appeals futile. The apex court should set an example by pronouncing judgments within a reasonable time. Delaying verdicts, as the court itself acknowledges, is a bane of the judicial system, and it is up to the court to address this issue.
T V Pandarinath Naidu, Kudige

Remark in poor taste

Apropos 'Modi has capitulated finally: Cong' (Feb 3), Congress leader Jairam Ramesh's remark is in poor taste and reflects political negativity at a moment of great significance for the economy. Trade negotiations are exercises in protecting national interest, not personal triumphs. India resisted US President Donald Trump's pressure for a coercive deal, ensuring strategic sectors and domestic industry were not compromised.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

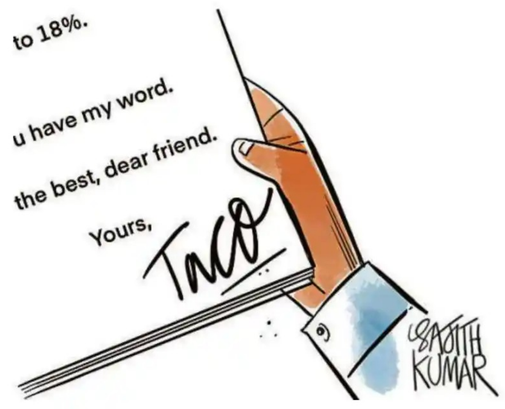
Rahul Gandhi doesn't want to speak. He is only interested in making false accusations, defaming our country, defaming our army, defaming our martyrs, and bringing disrepute to this country.

Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra CM

Don't blame the messenger because the message is unpleasant.

Ken Starr

TO BE PRECISE



IN PERSPECTIVE

A broken truce in Gaza

Unabated violence, aid restrictions, and an apathetic international community render the ceasefire ineffective

VISHAL R CHORADIYA

The announcement of the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement arrives amidst a grim reality that exposes the hollowness of diplomatic pronouncements divorced from accountability. Since the ceasefire commenced in October 2025, Israel has killed over 509 Palestinians and injured more than 1,350 in Gaza. These figures represent systematic violations of a truce that was never intended to bring genuine relief.

The pattern of Israeli conduct suggests a calculated strategy: exploiting the formal architecture of peace to continue a genocidal campaign while the international community looks away, distracted by geopolitical turmoil and shifting global attention.

The first phase of the ceasefire delivered virtually none of its stated objectives. Israel's military continues to extend beyond the agreed "yellow line". Aid deliveries have consistently fallen short of the agreed 600 trucks daily, frequently delivering less than half that number. The Rafah crossing, a critical lifeline for humanitarian access and medical evacuations, remained sealed until late January. Israel continues to ban international organisations from operating, maintaining its stranglehold over who can assist Palestinians and what can enter the besieged territory.

These facts shatter any claim to diplomatic achievement. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has established that humanitarian aid must not be conditioned, yet Israel persists in weaponising access to food, water, and medical supplies. Hospitals remain only partially functional, lacking the equipment and resources necessary for full operation. For Gaza's residents, the distinction between war and ceasefire has collapsed. The violence has simply acquired a different label while the killing continues.

United Nations experts have warned that Israel's continuing violations threaten the fragile truce, yet their calls for immediate cessation of attacks and unhindered aid delivery have been ignored. The international community's failure to enforce compliance reveals the performative nature of these agreements.

Israel retains comprehensive control over the pace and scope of all developments in Gaza. This dynamic ensures that any progress remains contingent on Israeli approval, transforming ostensible peace processes into instruments of occupation. Even rebuilding efforts serve to consolidate control rather than restore sovereignty.

Palestinians in Gaza express scepticism while the promises of the first phase remain unfulfilled. Residents anticipated that crossings would open, prices would fall, and attacks would cease. The reality has been displacement with no substantive change. For people who have endured years of siege and bombardment, political announcements feel abstract and distant compared to the urgent daily struggle for survival. Trump's formation of a so-called 'Board of Peace' to oversee subsequent phases inspires little confidence when set against the lived experience of continuous violence.

Trump's vision for Gaza's security and redevelopment represents a continuation of the settler-colonial project that has dispossessed Palestinians for decades. The proposed International Stabilisation Force, coordinating with Israel and Egypt while training Palestinian police, threatens to replicate the security coordination model that has entrenched apartheid in the West Bank.

After more than two years of assault that saw the killing of at least 71,662 Palestinians, UN experts have warned that peace initiatives allowing Israel to retain militarised control over Gaza will not end occupation but entrench it. The international community's complicity through silence proves damning. States that recently made declarations about recognising Palestinian statehood have offered no meaningful response to Israel's violations.

Rhetoric to real intent

Violence in the occupied West Bank continues to escalate as armed Israeli settlers and soldiers intensify assaults on Palestinian civilians. The Israeli Parliament advances legislation to extend sovereignty over parts of the West Bank in clear violation of international law. Israel has instrumentalised the ceasefire agreement to continue its brutal campaign under a veneer of diplomatic engagement. The announcement of the second phase sustains this fiction while killing, starvation, and dispossession proceed uninterrupted.

The ICJ has ordered the dismantlement of Israel's occupation. Implementation of this advisory opinion is long overdue. Member-states must act to end systematic violations of international law in occupied Palestine. This requires cessation of all attacks against civilians, unconditional humanitarian access through all crossings, Israeli withdrawal, including dismantlement of military sites beyond agreed lines, and accountability for war crimes.

The fragile truce in Gaza will remain meaningless without enforcement mechanisms that compel Israeli compliance. Palestinians deserve security, sovereignty, and justice. The international community must move beyond hollow rhetoric to action that upholds international law and human rights. Anything less condemns Palestinians to continued suffering while Israel exploits the language of peace to advance a genocidal agenda that must be urgently resisted.

(The writer is an assistant professor with the Department of Professional Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru)

Brahmin 'disillusionment' in UP triggers unease in BJP

DATELINE Lucknow

SANJAY PANDEY

When Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Keshav Prasad Maurya appealed to Swami Avimukteshwarananda, the Shankaracharya of the Jyotish Peeth, to calm his anger following alleged mistreatment of his disciples—including Brahmin *batuks* (children receiving Vedic education)—by the police at the Magh Mela (an annual ritual on the banks of the Ganga), it signalled the prevailing unease within the saffron party over perceived resentment in the Brahmin community in the state.

Videos purportedly showing policemen pushing and shoving *sadhus* and *batuks*, followed by the Shankaracharya sitting on a *dharna* in protest, went viral on social media, triggering anger among Brahmins.

Avimuktehswarananda claimed that the police had acted on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and said the fight today was between *asli* (real) and *nakli* (fake) Hindus.

Several Brahmin organisations came out in support of the Shankaracharya and demanded an apology from the state government. "The UP government should apologise to Avimukteshwarananda and punish those who misbehaved with his disciples," said Man Mohan Sharma, president of the All India Brahmin Mahasabha's Uttarakhand unit.

Large religious gatherings on the banks of the Ganga and at the Sangam—the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati at Prayagraj—have historically witnessed gatherings such as Dharm Sansad, where decisions pertaining to Hinduism and politics have often been articulated by seers.

At the Kumbh Dharm Sansad in 2013, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had demanded the projection of Narendra Modi as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, claiming it would "advance" the cause of Hindutva. At the 2019 Kumbh Dharm Sansad as well, seers had demanded the scrapping of Article 370 and the announcement of a date for the commencement of the Ram temple construction in Ayodhya.

While saints and seers appeared divided over the Shankaracharya's protest, a senior state administrative service official, Alankar Agnihotri—a Brahmin and then city magistrate of Bareilly—resigned, describing the state government as "anti-Brahmin" and protesting against the alleged 'humiliation' of Avimukteshwarananda.

In his resignation letter, Agnihotri said the manner in which the Shankaracharya's disciples—including young boys and elderly men—were beaten by the police has deeply hurt him. "They were dragged by their *shikha* (*choti*, which, for the Brahmins and other Hindus, is a sacred tuft of hair kept at the crown of the head symbolising devotion and adherence to Vedic traditions). This was very humiliating," he wrote.

Agnihotri said the incident, a matter of grave concern, reflected an anti-Brahmin mindset within the administration and government. "Sadly, those who claim to represent the Brahmins are silent," he added. He also slammed the BJP over the incident.

These developments come close on the heels of a meeting of the Brahmin MLAs of the BJP to discuss what they termed the "marginalisation" of their community in UP's electoral politics. Some MLAs reportedly said their community members were being "insulted" and that the administration routinely ignored their concerns. They stressed the need for Brahmin legislators to be more "assertive" in state politics.

Alarmed by the meeting, state BJP president Pankaj Chaudhary warned the MLAs against holding caste-specific meetings, saying such actions would be viewed as "indiscipline".

At least one MLA who had attended the meeting, however, chose to publicly challenge the leadership. "Brahmins are considered guides and thinkers in Sanatan traditions. Wherever the Brahmins gather, there is discussion on knowledge and reason that strengthens Hindu identity. Brahmins unite society, not divide it," BJP lawmaker Panchananda Pathak said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

Lucknow-based media analyst Sharat Pradhan says Brahmins are unhappy with the BJP. "It seems the BJP has taken the Brahmin support for granted. It thinks the Brahmins have nowhere else to go," Pradhan told *DH*.

"Brahmins may not be numerically strong (around 10% of the electorate), but they are influential," he added.

Another analyst pointed to what he described as different yardsticks adopted by the government in dealing with resignations by two senior officials: Alankar Agnihotri, who resigned in protest against the "humiliation" of Brahmins, and Prashant Kumar Singh, Ayodhya deputy GST commissioner, who resigned in support of Adityanath. While Agnihotri was suspended, no action was taken against Singh, a Thakur.

Interestingly, almost all the middle-level leaders, around half a dozen, who resigned from the BJP in protest against the UGC's Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions Regulations were from the Brahmin community.

While the state BJP leaders dismiss any resentment within the Brahmin community, rival parties such as the Samajwadi Party, Congress and the BSP have already begun efforts to woo the community.

Brahmins can influence the outcome in 60-70 seats across about two dozen districts, mainly in the eastern, central and Bundelkhand regions. In the 2007 Assembly polls, the community had backed the BSP under Mayawati. Since 2014, however, Brahmins have formed a core BJP support base—and any shift in their support could adversely impact the party's electoral prospects.

A feud between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is reshaping conflicts and alliances across the Middle East and Africa

A Saudi-UAE rupture echoes beyond the Gulf

VIVIAN NEREIM

The site of a recent car-bomb attack in southern Yemen. REUTERS

For years, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates opted to resolve their disagreements and border disputes quietly, behind the scenes. Now it appears as if a dam has burst, with the consequences rippling across the region and beyond.

The rupture between the two powerful and oil-rich neighbours, both of which have cultivated vast global influence, has the potential to move markets and exacerbate wars.

Nowhere is that clearer than in Yemen, where an Emirati-backed separatist group led a failed offensive in December to seize control of the country's south, a region located along crucial global trade routes. Saudi officials have pushed back forcefully, wresting influence from the Emirates and declaring that the kingdom alone will take responsibility for Yemen's future.

"This isn't a tactical disagreement," said H A Hellyer, a senior associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London. "It's a strategic split over what stability means in the Middle East."

Analysts say the tensions are spreading to other countries in the region, where the rift could worsen raging conflicts and fracture fragile alliances.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, the ruler of the United Arab Emirates, have long been viewed as natural partners by their allies in Washington. In 2015, their countries teamed up in Yemen, mounting a disastrous military intervention to beat back rebels who had taken over the capital.

In recent years, they have diverged, supporting opposing groups in Sudan's civil war, pursuing differing oil policies and entering into a heated economic rivalry.

Before the confrontation in Yemen, the Emirati and Saudi governments had publicly maintained a facade of brotherhood and cordiality, built on cultural and tribal ties. Over the span of a few weeks, those niceties have descended into an ugly war of words.

Saudi commentators and state-owned media platforms now display open contempt for the Emirates, accusing decision makers in the capital, Abu Dhabi, of seeding chaos around the region by supporting armed militias in Yemen and Sudan. They say that Emirati ambitions have become grandiose, and that it is time to cut the tiny country down to size.

In turn, Emirati elites grumble that Saudi Arabia is behaving like a domineering "big brother."

In January, the war of narratives escalated as Saudi Arabia sought to draw attention to past evidence of Emirati human rights violations, bringing journalists to Yemen to view abandoned facilities that local officials said were once Emirati-run secret prisons.

The officials running the tour — representatives of Yemen's internationally recognized and Saudi-backed government — said the Emirates had held and tortured Yemenis in those facilities.

None of the accusations were new: A United Nations panel of experts determined several years ago that Emirati forces in Yemen were responsible for extrajudicial detentions, enforced disappearance and torture.

The Emirati Defence Ministry nevertheless issued a firm denial of the accusations made in the recent tour, saying in a statement that they were "not based on any evidence" and were part of an "organized campaign to damage the reputation of the Emirati state."

In the past, the Emirates paid the salaries of some Yemeni fighters, but Saudi Arabia has now pledged to cover salary payments for all Yemeni government employees, civilian and military, for the foreseeable future. That is a financial commitment of more than $1 billion per year, according to two Yemeni officials briefed on the plan, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details that have not been made public.

Emirati officials have consistently denied financing or arming regional militias, including in Sudan, despite extensive evidence to the contrary. They have only spoken of the split with the Saudis in oblique terms. "The Emirates has been the target of an unprecedented media campaign," Anwar Gargash, a senior Emirati official, said at a conference last week. "Differing opinions are normal. What's not normal is wickedness in a dispute."

In a news briefing on Jan. 26, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said the kingdom's relationship with the Emirates was "critically important," but highlighted a "difference of view" in Yemen, noting that the Emirates had "decided to leave" the country.

"If that indeed is the case, and the UAE has completely left the issue of Yemen," said the minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, then that would be a "building block" to keeping the Saudi-Emirati relationship strong. He put emphasis on the word "if," appearing to underscore the level of distrust between their two governments.

The Emirati and Saudi governments did not respond to requests for comment.

So far, the Trump administration has shown reluctance to take sides. Both countries are key players from which Mr. Trump hopes to win support for his Middle East policies, and both have nurtured business ties with the president's family.

As the crisis deepens, Saudi Arabia is moving aggressively to counter Emirati interests, analysts say.

"As Riyadh sees it, trust with Abu Dhabi has been exhausted," said Salman al-Ansari, a Saudi political analyst. "Words and reassurances no longer matter."

Analysts say the conflict will most likely play out next in the Horn of Africa, the war-torn region located across the Red Sea from the Arabian Peninsula.

In Sudan, the two countries have backed opposing sides in a brutal civil war, with the Emirates supporting a paramilitary group called the Rapid Support Forces and Saudi Arabia backing the Sudanese military. In November, the Saudi crown prince urged the Trump administration to broker a peace deal in Sudan, intensifying an international spotlight on the Emirates' conduct there.

And in Somalia, where Saudi Arabia has been a firm backer of the central government, the Emirates has cultivated deep ties to a breakaway region called Somaliland. On January 12, Somalia announced that it was ending "all agreements" it had with the Emirates, citing "hostile and destabilising actions" by the Emirati government.

Wherever the two Gulf powers stand behind opposing sides, tensions are likely to rise, analysts say.

"We are bracing for the impact," said Alan Boswell, Horn of Africa project director for the International Crisis Group, a research organization focused on resolving global conflicts. "We expect this to escalate the war in Sudan and further divide Somalia."

Farther afield, Saudi Arabia is reportedly seeking to seal a trilateral mutual defence deal with Pakistan and Turkey. As news of that pact spread, Sheikh Mohammed, the Emirati ruler, made a whirlwind trip to India — Pakistan's nuclear-armed rival — and signalled his intent to secure his own mutual defence deal there.

The last time the Gulf was split by a crisis of this magnitude was in 2017, when Saudi Arabia and the Emirates joined forces to isolate Qatar, presenting a list of demands to the Qatari government.

"In this case, there is no list of demands," said Mohammed Baharoon, head of B'huth, a research centre in the Emirati city Dubai. There is a dangerous ambiguity to the current rift, he said.

The split with Qatar eventually ended with a diplomatic summit in 2021.

The Saudi-Emirati rift could be mended too, Mr. Baharoon said. But it might leave a scar, he said.

"How bad is the scar — what does it remind you of when you look in the mirror?" he asked. "That is something else that we will have to think about in the future."

The New York Times

More than medals

MALATHI RENATI

A rising tide lifts all boats! The water levels are evidently rising in Indian sport. With the Commonwealth Games 2030 in our kitty, and the strong political narrative to host the Olympics, the spotlight is firmly on India as a "sporting nation". Can we strike while the iron's hot? By fast-tracking long-standing gaps in our para-sport ecosystem and addressing deficiencies in infrastructure, economic opportunity, and social support for Persons with Disabilities (PwD)?

The 2011 census reveals around 2.2% are PwD, ~26 million Indians. Recent independent surveys argue the real prevalence is much higher at ~8%. There are 21 specific categories of disability under India's Right of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, including locomotor, visual, hearing, and speech disabilities. The introduction of the Unique ID for PwDs (ID UDID) in 2016 helps create a national database and improve access to schemes. Yet systemic gaps persist. Undercounting distorts resource allocation; public infrastructure remains largely inaccessible, and stigma continues to limit social and economic participation.

Today, India may have over 100 million PwDs, but only a handful get the opportunity to feature in structured sport through systems like SAI NCOEs, TOPS and Khelo India grassroots programmes. The recent Union Budget 2026-27 allocated Rs 1,669.72 crore to the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), a 30% increase, and Rs 500 crore has been earmarked for the sports manufacturing sector, including for research, which should be leveraged to make assisted sports devices.

Para sport itself is a relatively new entrant, introduced only in the 1960 Olympic Games. India sent her first contingent of 10 para-athletes to the 1968 games. Murlikant Petkar won India's first gold (50m freestyle) in 1972. But it was not until the early 2000s that we started seeing the Overton Window stretch and policy attention slowly embrace this minority group through disability welfare and sport-linked rehabilitation programmes. India has largely been a nation of hero worshippers; sport is no different. Para-athletes Devendra Jhajharia (discus) and Rajinder Singh (powerlifting) became overnight celebrities with their wins at Athens 2004. State-sponsored cash awards, incentives and selective infrastructure support for elite success followed, though mass participation and community sport remained largely neglected. Structural momentum followed when TOPS included para-sports in 2020 and Khelo India in 2023, bringing para-athletes into a more organised ecosystem of coaching, equipment, and competition exposure. With sport being a state subject, some of the early movers were Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Mizoram. Encouragingly, the recent National Sports Policy (NSP2025) has explicitly identified PwD as a priority group. Following suit, the National Sports Governance Act 2025 provides statutory recognition and regulation of national sports bodies, including the National Paralympic Committee. Another gamechanger was the 2007 IPC classification, which groups para-athletes by their functional impact rather than their medical condition, creating a level playing field.

The results were evident. India's Paralympic contingent grew to 54 in Tokyo 2020 and 80+ in Paris 2024. India won a record 29 medals at Paris, with Sheetal Devi, Avani Lekhara, and Sumit Antil showcasing their prowess. Yet, this success rests on a long and arduous journey paved by a few trailblazers like Joginder Singh (athletics – three medals, 1984), Deepa Malik (shotput – first woman medallist, 2016), and Mariyappan Thangavelu (high jump, 2016, 2020, 2024), the enduring torch-bearers of para sport in India.

The elite level shows glimmers of hope, but the markets and society lag on multiple fronts:

Adaptive equipment and supply chains: PwDs require customised equipment. Imported units can cost up to Rs 50 lakh, out of reach for the majority. There is scope for the markets to ride the momentum of Atmanirbhar Bharat, Vocal for Local and Viksit Bharat to scale domestic manufacturing and encourage R&D. Due to lack of awareness, rental models or para-specific e-commerce have not evolved. **Funding:** Financial support is critical, especially since parasport equipment/infrastructure often costs more than its able-bodied equivalents. Philanthropy/CSR can infuse the much-needed shot in the arm. Para-leagues should function alongside their mainstream leagues as is done in all quadrennial global events. **Infrastructure access:** Around 70% of PwDs reside in rural India, but the few facilities available are largely urban-centric. **Talent pipeline and coaching:** Mass participation is still a pipedream. Coach certification is nonexistent. The 'pity' narrative and stigma that society voices continue to be a barrier, especially for girls/disadvantaged.

This is a rare opportunity to leapfrog support for PwD. Markets will respond when society leads, when we move beyond stereotypes and choose inclusion by default, not by exception.

(The writer is the head of the Policy School, The Takshashila Institution)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 1976

Over 1,000 perish in Guatemala quake

Guatemala City, Feb. 4.
More than 1,000 people were killed in a series of earthquakes, which devastated this Central American capital early today, it was officially announced. Bogota's *Radio Caracol* quoted the *Guatemala Radio* as saying in an emergency broadcast that a large number of buildings had been destroyed and over 1,500 people were injured. In Uppsala, Prof. Marcus Baath, Director of the observatory, said the earthquake was registered at 09-14 GMT (2.44 IST), with a force of 7.3 on the Richter Scale.

25 YEARS AGO: FEBRUARY 2001

PM sets up team to probe killing of Sikhs in Kashmir

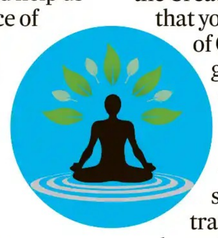
New Delhi, Feb 4
Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today deputed a three-member team to visit Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of killings of six Sikhs in Srinagar on Saturday. The team will comprise Minister of State for Civil Aviation Chaman Lal Gupta, Minister of State for Chemical and Fertiliser S S Dhindsa and National Commission for minorities member Tarlochan Singh. Six Sikhs were killed and eight other including a woman, injured when unidentified armed youths fired indiscriminately in the valley on Saturday.

OASIS | NAJIB SHAH

Rituals are more than hollow gestures

Rituals are important in life. They help you stay focused and bring awareness. Even a champion tennis player like Nadal went through multiple rituals – from adjusting his clothes to placing his water bottles in a specific pattern to entering and exiting the court by stepping with his right foot. The problem is that when done mindlessly, rituals cease to be a means to the end. For instance, as a country, do we realise the enormous significance of the Republic Day – the day we gave ourselves the Constitution which resolves to secure for each of us justice, liberty, equality and fraternity? If not, it becomes a routine, ritualistic celebration.

In the context of religious beliefs, rituals play an even more important role. They create a feeling of community, of togetherness, and help us appreciate the very presence of the Almighty. So, when we bow, join our hands, kneel, and genuflect in prayer, we often tend to forget the purpose for which these acts are being done. Even as we mutter our sacred texts, the rituals become meaningless motions. If we approach rituals with reverence, humility, solemnity and concentration, they take on a different meaning.



Reverence, for we are after all praying to the Almighty, a fact we should never lose sight of. We are praying in a divine presence, who we believe is the Creator. Humility to acknowledge that you are what you are because of God's grace. Solemnity is a given once you accept, and only when you accept, that you are in the presence of a higher power. All these – reverence, humility and solemnity – help in concentrating on our prayers. Rituals then take on a different meaning, as do prayers.

There is an Islamic concept which defines this best; it is the concept of *taqwa*. This word loosely translates to mean 'God-consciousness' or 'piety'. What this in effect would suggest is that you are cognisant of the presence of God. And once you do that, you can never do consciously any wrong – be it in prayer, or social or commercial dealings, in your daily routine. Which child does any mischief in the presence of her teacher? The critical difference here being that God is omnipresent – which means that you will not do any wrong even when there is no minder.

So, approach rituals with an understanding and seriousness that they demand – make them meaningful. And in case they have ceased to serve any purpose, abandon them.

Kerala Assembly resolution urges Centre to stop 'discrimination'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: The Kerala Assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution urging the Central government to end the "discrimination" and "neglect" towards the state.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who moved the resolution, listed out instances — ranging from the reduction in the financial allocations and borrowing limits to the denial of key proposals, like an All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and a high-speed rail project.

"By denying the genuine needs of Kerala, the Centre was not only disappointing the state but also insulting the basic principles of co-operative federalism. The latest Union Budget further aggravates the discrimination and neglect," said the resolution.

It was passed by the House in the absence of members of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in the Opposition, who boycotted the proceedings earlier in the day as part of an ongoing protest over the Sabarimala gold heist.

Vijayan said the state would suffer a loss of Rs 3,800 crore as the Central government replaced the MGNREGA with the VB-G RAM-G Act.

Probe ordered against IndiGo for unfair biz practices

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Wednesday ordered a detailed probe against IndiGo for unfair business practices, nearly two months after the country's largest airline cancelled thousands of flights due to operational issues, causing hardships to passengers.

After taking into consideration data related to airlines, the CCI has prima facie concluded that IndiGo has abused its dominant position.

In a 16-page order, CCI said that by cancelling thousands of flights, which constituted a significant portion of the scheduled capacity, IndiGo effectively withheld its services from the market, creating an artificial scarcity, limiting consumer access to air travel during peak demand. CCI also rejected objections raised by IndiGo that the regulator does not have the jurisdiction to look into the case.

Khemchand Singh sworn in as Manipur CM; Prez Rule revoked

Nemcha Kipgen becomes state's first woman Deputy CM

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

Yumnam Khemchand Singh, a two-time MLA from the Meitei community, took oath as the new chief minister of Manipur on Wednesday evening, just hours after the nearly year-long President's Rule was revoked in the strife-torn state.

Nemcha Kipgen, a Kuki MLA, was sworn in virtually from Manipur Bhawan in New Delhi as the state's first woman Deputy CM, while Losii Dikho, a Naga legislator, took oath as another Deputy CM. Konthoujam Govindas Singh and Khuraijam Loken Singh, both Meitei legislators, were sworn in as ministers. Dikho and Loken represent the Naga People's Front and the National People's Party, respectively — both allies of the NDA.

Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla administered the oath of office and secrecy at Lok Bhavan in Imphal during a brief ceremony attended by BJP's central observer Tarun Chugh, the party's Northeast coordinator Sambit Patra, and others.

Khemchand Singh, 62, a black belt in taekwondo, was sworn in a day after being elected leader of the BJP legislature party in Manipur.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla felicitates Yumnam Khemchand Singh during the latter's swearing-in as the new state CM, in Imphal, on Wednesday. PTI

Ally NPP back

The ceremony also marked the return of the National People's Party (NPP), an NDA ally, to the Manipur government after more than a year, with Loken Singh inducted as a minister. The NPP, led by Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma, had withdrawn support in November 2024, questioning then chief minister Biren Singh's handling of the Meitei-Kuki conflict. Biren resigned in February, after which President's Rule was imposed. Manipur has remained tense due to the conflict since May 2023.

According to Manipur BJP leaders, by inducting Kuki, Naga and Meitei legislators from the BJP, NPP and NPF, the party is seeking to bridge the ethnic divide as well as that with its allies. "With representatives from the three major communities and the allies, it will now be easier for the government to reach out to the communities to find a solution to the conflict. The immediate priority will be the resettlement of displaced persons," a leader said.

Congratulating Khemchand Singh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X, "I'm confident they will work diligently towards furthering development and prosperity for my sisters and brothers of Manipur."

Virtual oath

In a rare instance, Nemcha Kipgen, the MLA from the Kuki community, virtually took oath as Manipur's first woman deputy CM, amid warnings issued by Kuki-Zo organisations over her decision to join a "Meitei government". Kipgen, 60, earlier served as a minister in the Biren Singh government.

Though no clear reason was cited for her decision to take the oath virtually, sources attributed it to security concerns both in the Meitei-dominated valley and from Kuki-Zo organisations, which had earlier asked Kuki MLAs not to join the government.

Meanwhile, security arrangements in and around the residences of Kuki-Zo MLAs have been beefed up in view of the warning and fear of violence.

Census 2027 to include caste query in phase 2

SUMIT PANDE
NEW DELHI, DHNS

DATA DRIVE

- Questionnaire for phase-1 had query on whether head of household belonged to SC, ST , or 'Other' category
- Oppn decried omission of similar query for OBC and general-category households
- Govt says data to be collected in paper mode 'only in unavoidable circumstances'

The central government informed Parliament on Wednesday that the questionnaire for the second phase of Census 2027 would have questions to enumerate the country's caste-wise population.

"Questions for the second phase (of the census), including the questions on caste, will be notified before the commencement of the second phase," said Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai in a written answer tabled in the Rajya Sabha in response to a question by DMK MP Rajathi.

The Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, under the Union Home Ministry, is conducting the enumeration in two phases.

In the first phase, also called House-Listing Enumeration, information like housing conditions, assets, and amenities is being collected from each household. The second phase, Population Enumeration, is designed to count the demographics, socio-economic, cultural, and other details.

The Registrar Census questionnaire for the first phase, released last month, had one question that asked whether the head of the household belonged to a Scheduled Caste, a Scheduled Tribe, or the "Other" category. The Opposition subsequently decried the omission of a similar query regarding OBC and general-category households.

In response to another question in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, the government said enumerators would collect data in paper mode "only in unavoidable circumstances".

Otherwise, the data collection for the first phase would be done primarily using mobile apps, the Census Management and Monitoring Portal, and the Self Enumeration Portal.

The last caste census in India was in 1931. Post-independence, census counts tabulated the population under three heads — SC, ST, and Others. The Mandal Commission Report, which is the basis for the OBC reservations implemented in 1990, has extrapolated numbers from the 1931 Census Report.

Rahul calls ex-aide Ravneet Bittu 'traitor friend'; BJP hits back

Heated exchange amid Oppn MPs' stir outside Parliament

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, a former Congress MP, engaged in a verbal duel during a protest by suspended MPs in Parliament House on Wednesday, with the former calling the BJP leader a "traitor friend" and the latter retorting with a "desh ke dushman" (enemy of the nation) jibe.

The incident took place at Parliament's Makar Dwar, the main entrance at the new Parliament building, at around 11.30 am, where Rahul joined the eight suspended Opposition MPs in solidarity.

The Congress released a video of the exchange on social media.

It showed Bittu saying as he passed by: "They (the suspended MPs) are sitting here as if they have won a war."

Union Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu, right, in a conversation with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during the Budget Session of Parliament. PTI

Rahul shot back, "The thing is, here is a traitor walking right by. Take a look at the face."

The former Congress chief then reached towards Bittu for a handshake and said: "Hello brother, my traitor friend. Don't worry, you will come back (to the Congress)."

Bittu, the minister of state for Railways and Food Processing, declined the handshake invite, calling Rahul "desh ke dushman".

A two-time Lok Sabha member from the Congress before he joined the BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the grandson of late Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, Bittu then walked past the protesting MPs, who jeered at him, chanting "surrender, surrender".

Currently a Rajya Sabha member after losing the 2024 Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket, Bittu was once considered close to Rahul. A Congress leader sought to describe Rahul's comments as an "emotional outburst" at a close aide who switched sides.

However, the BJP attacked Rahul for his "traitor" comments, claiming that the entire Sikh community was anguished by the remarks.

Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri alleged that Rahul targeted Bittu for quitting the Congress.

"This word, 'traitor', cannot be taken lightly. The word is used for someone who has betrayed his country. This is a very sensitive issue for the Sikh community," he told reporters.

"Ravneet Singh Bittu is not just an MP, not just a member of a Sikh family that has served the country. His grandfather fell to an assassin's bullet, and you call him a traitor. This is unacceptable," he added.

Congress Media and Publicity Department chairman Pawan Khera hit back at Puri, saying, "When a three-time MP from a certain party sells his ideology and integrity for only a ministerial berth (and maybe to hush some cases), he is nothing but a lowly traitor."

US trade deal will hurt Indian farmers: Kharge

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Attacking the NDA government at the Centre over the India-US trade deal, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge alleged on Wednesday that the pact would hurt Indian farmers' interests.

Participating in the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Upper House, the Congress chief said it was "an insult to the Indian Parliament that parliamentarians got to know about the deal when it was in session from US President Donald Trump and not the government".

Quoting US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, he said: "The new US-India deal will export farm products to India's massive markets, lifting prices and pumping cash into rural America. Meaning, American farmers will benefit."

Asserting that the deal would hurt Indian farmers' interests, he alleged that the Central government wanted to "destroy" India's agriculture sector.

In his speech, Kharge also said the President's address was silent on many important matters.

NRI in Australia loses Rs 48L to digital arrest gang

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

In what the cops described as a first-of-its-kind case, a non-resident Indian (NRI) youth in Australia fell victim to a "digital arrest" scam, with fraudsters siphoning Rs 48 lakh from his Australian and Indian bank accounts.

The Ahmedabad Cyber Crime Police Station registered an FIR on Tuesday based on a complaint filed by the victim's father, who lives in Ahmedabad. He told the police that his son, who lives in Adelaide, lost A$25,000 — roughly Rs 14 lakh — from his ANZ Bank and Commonwealth Bank accounts and Rs 34 lakh from Axis Bank in Ahmedabad to cybercriminals who put him under "digital arrest" in August last year.

The father learnt about it nearly a month later, on September 27, from his other son, who also lives in Australia.

According to the FIR, the victim first received a call from a woman who identified herself as an officer from the Indian High Commission. She told him the Mumbai Police had an arrest warrant against him. She then gave him a phone number.

When the victim called it, the person on the other side said it belonged to the Mumbai Crime Branch headquarters and asked him to make a video call.

What followed was a "digital arrest" scam. Cyber-fraudsters, posing as police officers, informed the victim that a phone number registered in his name had been linked to cryptocurrency and money-laundering activities and required investigation.

Keeladi archaeologist rejects ASI's 'critical evaluation'

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Standing by his 982-page report on excavations in Keeladi and demanding its immediate release, archaeologist K Amarnath Ramakrishna has outright rejected the 114-page "critical evaluation and recommendation" note of his report prepared by five officers of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), calling it "more mechanical" than factual.

The note prepared by archaeologists Priyank Gupta, Garima Kaushik, P Aravazhi, Hemsagar A Naik, and Nandini Bhattacharya Sahu says the narrative of Ramakrishna on Keeladi blends historical background, literary references and research gaps without clear thematic divisions, besides commenting that it reduces readability and obscures analytical focus.

In a four-page note sent to the Director General, ASI, dated February 3, according to sources, Amarnath objected to officers asking him to improve his report based on their observations and alleged that their recommendations are beset with "serious and fundamental flaws."

Ramakrishna, who discovered the Sangam Era site near Madurai in 2014, has been involved in a running battle with his employer, ASI, over the latter's refusal to accept his report, which dates Keeladi's period to between the 8th century BCE and the 3rd century CE.

Amarnath's report dates Keeladi's period to between the 8th century BCE and the 3rd century CE. TNSDA

In May 2025, two years after the report was submitted, the ASI asked Ramakrishna to "resubmit" the report, but the archaeologist declined to do so, following which five officers were tasked to evaluate the document.

In his response, Ramakrishna said the content, nature of the language, structure, and overall presentation of the critical evaluation disclose "non-application of scholarly human mind" to the report and added that he prepared the findings after carrying out meticulous excavation.

The archaeologist also alleged that the evaluation note seems to be a "product of AI-assisted technology" as it has been prepared in a "monotonous pattern" with repetitive and similar terminology being applied uniformly across the note. "The same is more obvious from the fact that the evaluation note is more mechanical."

IIT-Bombay student dies by suicide

MUMBAI, DHNS: An Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B) student died by suicide in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Naman Agarwal (21), a second-year BTech civil engineering student, hailed from Pilani in Rajasthan.

The Powai police have registered a case, and investigations are underway. The body has been sent to Rajawadi Hospital, where a post-mortem exam will be conducted. The reason for him taking the extreme step is not known yet.

This is the third reported case of student suicide at the IIT-B Powai campus in recent years.

(*If you are in distress, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help*)

UP sisters' deaths trigger alarm over gaming addiction

NEW DELHI, PTI

The death of three minor sisters, who were allegedly obsessed with a Korean task-based online game, has put a spotlight on the severe effects of online gaming addiction and the increasing craze for Korean popular culture among youth.

The police suggested that the sisters were "influenced" by Korean content and were highly "addicted" to mobile phones and an online Korean task-based interactive game.

A mix of elements, including limited social interaction, blurring of lines between reel and real and addictive online gaming, could lead adolescents to take extreme steps, mental health experts said.

According to forensic psychologist Deepti Puranik, any addiction can be looked at in terms of the brain responding to a reward system. "Games give pleasure to these kids through rewards or appreciation. Gaming directly may not cause an individual to take extreme steps, but it can lead to a lot of these factors that can make an individual's life chaotic and uncontrollable," Puranik said.

The Mumbai-based psychologist added that adolescents associate themselves with their gamer identities, and taking that away can lead to drastic results. "Their entire psyche starts moving around their competency in that game rather than in real life. When you take that away, the identity as an individual collapses. They may experience complete emotional isolation that can lead to them taking extreme steps," she said.

Chetan Kumar, father of the three sisters, said that they had been playing the game for close to three years and had not attended school for almost the same duration after failing academically, "which made them feel embarrassed and increasingly withdrawn."

Another angle that emerged out of initial police reports was the sisters' obsession with Korean popular culture. Kumar said that the girls would often say they wanted to go to Korea.

According to Clinical psychologist Shweta Sharma, the fascination for Korean pop culture in young children arises out of the emotional unavailability of parents. "Usually, people are not going outside now. Parents don't have time. Emotional availability is definitely not there. We are providing children with all the facilities without understanding whether they are able to handle it or not. So, that emotional need is not getting fulfilled.

14-yr-old ends life in Bhopal, family blames mobile game addiction

A 14-year-old boy allegedly died by suicide in Bhopal, with his family members suspecting that his addiction to a mobile game was responsible for his death, reports PTI.

Ansh Sahu, a Class 9 student, was found hanging at his house in Shriram Colony on Monday afternoon. The only child of his parents, he studied at a reputed school in the city. His parents teach at a private school, Deputy Commissioner of Police Vivek Singh said.

He was allegedly addicted to the mobile game 'Free Fire', Singh said, adding that on the day of the incident, Ansh's mother had reprimanded him for mobile gaming. Earlier, Rs 28,000 had been deducted from his grandfather's bank account due to the same game, the DCP said.

Sociologist Andre Beteille dies at 91

NEW DELHI, PTI: Noted sociologist and writer Andre Beteille died due to age-related illness at his residence here on Tuesday night. He was 91.

Andre Beteille

"My father was ailing for some time and was in the hospital. Last night we brought him home, where he passed away," his daughter, Radha Beteille, said.

His last rites were performed on Wednesday. Beteille was a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Delhi since 2003. He was known for his studies on the caste system and social inequalities in India.

Born in West Bengal to a French father and an Indian mother, Beteille moved to Delhi after completing his MA from Calcutta University.

Throughout his career, Beteille authored several books covering a wide range of topics from political sociology to the sociology of religion. His prominent works include 'Caste, Class and Power', 'Society and Politics in India' and 'The Idea of Natural Inequality and Other Essays'.

He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2005 for his contribution to literature and education.

'His health is not good': SC asks Centre to review Wangchuk's detention

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre if there was any possibility for the government to relook at the detention of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk considering his health condition.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P B Varale observed that Wangchuk's health report was not good and asked Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, to seek instructions in the matter.

"Apart from submissions, counter submissions and law points, just give a thought to it, as an officer of the Court. The detention order is passed on September 26, 2025, nearly five months.

"Considering the health condition of the detainee... The report which we saw earlier, it shows that his health is not that good. There are certain age-related, may be otherwise. Is there a possibility for the government to rethink, or even relook? the bench observed orally.

Sonam Wangchuk

Nataraj said that he would put the suggestion to the concerned authorities.

During the hearing, the additional solicitor general submitted that Wangchuk was responsible for violence in Leh last year in which four people died and 161 were injured.

"It was ultimately, his provocative speech, provocation, instigation. The person need not actively participate, the propensity of person to influence a group of persons... that is more than sufficient," Nataraj said.

Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj contended that order of Wangchuk's detention was approved on October 3, 2025, and there is no challenge to the approval order.

The arguments remained inconclusive and are set to continue on Thursday.

SC raps CBI & ED over 'unexplained delay' in Anil Ambani fraud probe

Directs agencies to conduct 'fair, prompt' probe

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Expressing displeasure over the "unexplained delay" in investigating alleged siphoning of huge sums of money, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the CBI and Enforcement Directorate to conduct a "fair", "prompt" and dispassionate probe into an alleged banking and corporate fraud of about Rs 40,000 crore involving the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG) and Anil Ambani.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi asked why separate FIRs had not been registered on complaints from different banks, saying, "The nature of the offence may be the same, but the complainant is different, and the time of transaction might be different."

RS 40,000-CR FRAUD

Anil Ambani

- SC calls case 'very serious', seeks monthly status reports
- Questions CBI over single FIR despite multiple bank complaints
- SC flags 'disturbing aspects' in bank fraud probe

The bench said the court would like to receive a status report every month and see how the central agencies take the investigation to its logical conclusion. It noted that the probe agencies had already taken considerable time to commence the investigation, and directed the ED to constitute an SIT comprising senior officers to probe ADAG and others.

The bench also recorded the appearances of Anil Ambani and ADAG through senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Shyam Divan, granting them four weeks to file their responses to the plea.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the ED and CBI, informed the court that the funds siphoned off amounted to around Rs 40,000 crore and that the probe was ongoing.

"There are two or three disturbing aspects. The CBI says that on the basis of a complaint received from one bank, an FIR was registered. Meanwhile, complaints have also been received from other financial institutions. Now they say they won't register separate FIRs," the SC said.

Mehta said the first FIR came from the SBI, and later, other banks also intimated about alleged siphoning, which was also included in the investigation. The bench asked if these complaints would not amount to separate, independent offences.

Telangana Speaker rejects another disqualification petition

HYDERABAD, DHNS: Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar dismissed yet another disqualification petition filed by the Opposition BRS, this time against Jagityal MLA Dr M Sanjay Kumar.

With this, the Speaker has rejected eight such petitions—against MLAs who defected from the BRS—over the past few days.

Delivering a clean chit to all eight legislators, Prasad Kumar ruled that there was no proof that they had joined another party—the Congress—after the 2023 Assembly polls.

Acting on a Supreme Court directive, the Speaker recently concluded inquiries under the 10th Schedule of the Constitution.

While he has ruled on eight cases in phases, including Sanjay's on Wednesday, the hearings for Kadiyam Srihari and Danam Nagender stand deferred, as they sought extra time to appear.

Interestingly, Sanjay openly affirmed on Wednesday that he won on a BRS ticket and remains in the party. However, he stressed that he has been collaborating with the ruling Congress for Jagityal's development.

"I met CM A Revanth Reddy in December to get some funds released for my constituency. If the BRS issues a whip tomorrow for any Bill, I will support it if asked," he said.

He added that Rs 5,000 is deducted monthly from his salary for the BRS, and that he has submitted an affidavit affirming his BRS membership.

Insolvent firm with links to Revanth got govt deals: KTR

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Alleging that an insolvent company acting as a benami for Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has been awarded government contracts worth Rs 6,000 crore over the past two years, BRS working president KT Rama Rao demanded their immediate cancellation.

Talking to reporters on Wednesday, he accused Revanth of misusing thousands of crores in public funds by diverting them to his alleged benami entity, KLSR. KTR called for blacklisting the company and cancelling all ineligible contracts.

Despite its insolvency, he claimed, KLSR secured

KT Rama Rao

projects worth nearly Rs 6,000 crore under the current administration, including AMRUT Scheme works, Jal Jeevan Mission, Young India Residential Schools, Telangana irrigation projects, and road development.

He questioned how a financially distressed firm, insolvent since 2023 and unable to pay even Rs 15 lakh in employee salaries, could furnish massive bank guarantees for contracts from 2024 to 2026, especially in the Municipal Administration Department and the CM's own constituency.

KTR urged Revanth Reddy to explain these awards. He said the Supreme Court had recently issued notices to the Telangana government seeking clarification on large-scale financial transactions continuing in the company despite its insolvency proceedings, as well as allegations relating to attempts to influence judicial processes.

According to KTR, fearing that his benami operations would be exposed, Revanth orchestrated what he termed a political drama from Davos under the guise of forming a Special Investigation Team to divert public attention.

The BRS leader demanded that an immediate investigation be launched into the company.

J&K: Top Jaish commander among 3 terrorists killed in two separate encounters

JAMMU, PTI: Three terrorists were killed in two separate encounters in J&K's Kishtwar and Udhampur districts on Wednesday.

In Udhampur, two Pakistani terrorists, including a self-styled top commander of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, were killed after they were trapped inside a cave. Several powerful blasts were heard when the forces stormed the cave around noon.

Officials said one of the deceased terrorists, self-styled commander of the JeM, Rubani alias Abu Mavia, was active in the area for the last several years.

The terrorists were located by joint troops of the Army, police and CRPF amid intensified search operations in the higher reaches of Ramnagar-Basantgarh area around 4 pm on Tuesday, leading to a fierce gunfight, the officials said.

In a separate incident, a suspected Pakistani terrorist was killed in an ongoing operation in the snow-bound higher reaches of Kishtwar district on Wednesday evening, officials said.

"One terrorist has been successfully neutralised. Operation is in progress," the army said in a post on X. The officials said the latest encounter started when a joint search party was carrying out searches in Chingam forest.

This was the fifth encounter in the Chatroo belt over the past 18 days as the army and police continued their search for a group of terrorists affiliated with the JeM.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

HI, THIS IS YOUR MOBILE WIRELESS CARRIER, AND WE'RE DOING A SURVEY TO SEE IF YOU'RE HAPPY WITH OUR SERVICE
NO, I'M NOT
WHO WOULD BE HAPPY ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU KEEP CHARGING MORE EVERY MONTH FOR NO REASON?
10-28
WELL, TECHNICALLY, WE ARE, BUT LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU

Hagar The Horrible

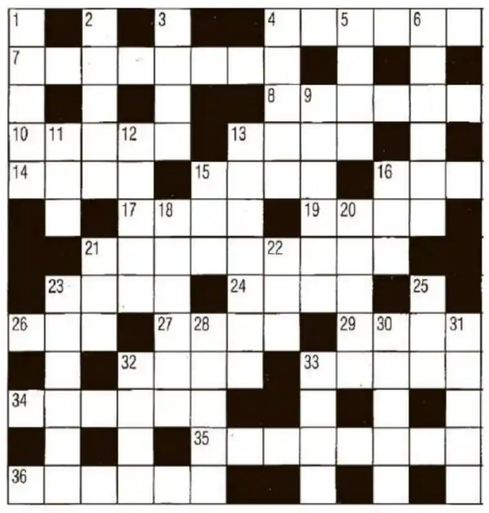
Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

I JUST NOTICED THE NOTCH IN YOUR ROOF
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE PLANNING TO KEEP TRACK OF SOMETHING, BUT NATURALLY YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ME!
NOTCH!
HEE HEE HEE HEE HEE

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12347



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
4 Get to suit (6)
7 In optics, a bit of looker? (8)
8 Get together against backing a dog and a horse (4,2)
10 Nominally you'll find a clue in central Dakar (5)
13 Joe, by the way, is the tenor (4)
14 The high cost of terrorism? (4)
15 Writers of a footnote about certain points (4)
16 Not all crab apples can be eaten (3)
17 Kick in the rear? (4)
19 Biblical name in every thesaurus (4)
21 Grand old guard giving timely information (4,5)
23 Nevertheless one may be thought really to exist (4)
24 She's back, more than half asleep (4)
26 Satisfied with a methodical start (3)
27 Prevalent depression in the countryside? (4)
29 Pressure on a youth with nothing to hide? (4)
32 Dispose of, part used, for £50 (4)
33 Border on being edgy (5)
34 Charm a chap with temptation (6)
35 A case of 'hit and run' involving children (8)
36 Nowadays, an opening is always coming (6)

DOWN
1 Food they bake badly at Birkenhead? (5)
2 Material may be mined (5)
3 Make a little love with a light touch (4)
4 Start to live with spirit (5)
5 Is incapable of hypocrisy? (4)
6 The terrorists twice gave mum a turn (3,3)
9 Liquid maybe, but a mug will take only half (6)
11 Owl fluttering near the ground (3)
12 Good man's boat wrecked around Beachy Head (5)
13 On the cards as good advice? (3,4)
15 A case of seediness? (3)
16 Utterance of a bachelor on fishing lunch (3)
18 Is he a Romeo to a girl? (6)
20 Climb on a fish's back, perhaps? (5)
21 Achieve one's target at last (3)
22 The dealer's drink? (3)
23 Held to rhyme with 'howled' (6)
25 With wages cut, will he joke? (3)
28 Warning of real disaster starting tomorrow? (5)
30 Tell someone the arrangement? (5)
31 Possibly needs to be thick (5)
32 Satisfied it's safe (4)
33 Do such tomatoes taste like grapes? (4)

ACROSS
4 Scattered, scanty (6)
7 Edible snail (8)
8 Engraves (6)
10 Frog noise (5)
13 Insects (4)
14 Nobleman (4)
15 Fronded plant (4)
16 Anger, annoy (3)
17 End part (4)
19 Unguis (4)
21 Christmas show (9)
23 Planet (4)
24 Vessel for flowers (4)
26 Karate expert (3)
27 Sharpen (4)
29 Midday (4)
32 Plant ovule (4)
33 Proverb (5)
34 Surgical stitch (6)
35 An explosive (8)
36 Against (6)

DOWN
1 Fight with swords (5)
2 Thespian (5)
3 Long journey (4)
4 Guide (5)
5 Curves (4)
6 Israeli monetary unit (6)
9 Sport (6)
11 Torn cloth (3)
12 Communion table (5)
13 Dear (7)
15 Seizure (3)
16 Contend (3)
18 Solution (6)
20 Improve (5)
21 Cooking vessel (3)
22 Floor covering (3)
23 Grown-up (6)
25 Corgi, say (3)
28 Takes notice of (5)
30 Desert's fertile spot (5)
31 At no time (5)
32 Lather (4)
33 First man (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12346

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Pa-uses 7, Take time 8, O-use 10, Cur-few 11, Al-b-ert 14, A-ft. 16, Tunes 17, Only 19, Pu-shy 21, Belay 22, Poppy 23, Bart. 26, At war 28, Ja-R 29, Shires 30, Bantam 31, A-way 32, Accruing 33, Sea dog.
DOWN: 1, Pancho 2, Stuffy 3, Ste-w 4, Healthy 5, Gi-VE-n 6, Gents 8, Or-a-l 9, Set 12, Buy 13, Refer 15, Pulpy 18, North 19, P-E-p 20, Sa-y 21, Bore out 22, Par (rap) 23, Banana 24, Arty 25, Ta-Ming 26, Assam 27, Win-CH 28, Jaw 30, Bags.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Scarab 7, Appetite 8, Hags 10, Erases 11, Detest 14, Ion 16, Roses 17, Barn 19, Caper 21, Court 22, Messy 23, Cane 26, Bison 28, Tap 29, Almost 30, Forest 31, Ayes 32, Enlarges 33, Tories.
DOWN: 1, Superb 2, Reason 3, Bass 4, Leveret 5, Kites 6, Sects 8, Hair 9, Gen 12, Tor 13, Sedan 15, Pause 18, April 19, Cos 20, Pry 21, Censure 22, Moo 23, Career 24, Apes 25, Enters 26, Baker 27, Smile 28, Toy 30, Fast.

◆SU-DO-KU-6822◆

					9	4	1	
				1	6		7	3
			8				2	
1							4	
3		8				6		9
	6							7
	8				3			
2	9		5	8				
	4	1	2					

medium

SOLUTION TO 6821

6	1	9	2	7	8	5	3	4
4	7	5	6	1	3	2	9	8
2	3	8	4	9	5	1	7	6
7	6	4	3	8	1	9	5	2
8	9	1	5	2	7	6	4	3
5	2	3	9	6	4	7	8	1
9	4	2	8	5	6	3	1	7
3	5	7	1	4	2	8	6	9
1	8	6	7	3	9	4	2	5

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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D2	C3	L1	N1	E1	U1	I1	3rd Letter Triple	RACK 1
W4	O1	S1	D2	D2	O1	Y4	Double Word Score	RACK 2
H4	N1	A1	E1	T1	P3	R1		RACK 3
R1	S1	T1	U1	O1	E1	M3	Triple Word Score	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 155-165
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

C3 H4 Y4 L1 O1 U1 S1	RACK 1 =	95
S1 A1 G2 E1 L1 Y4	RACK 2 =	10
P3 I1 T1 Y4	RACK 3 =	9
C3 R1 A1 P3 P3 I1 E1	RACK 4 =	76
PAR SCORE 130-140	JUDD'S TOTAL	190

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NUWDO
GLIOC
NMERNA
MOLOYG

Nice job! You know them all! I guess the cotton candy helped.
I like cumulus the best.
I can't wait to get an "A" on this test tomorrow!
7/28
SHE KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRATUS, CIRRUS AND CUMULUS AND WAS ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: CLOCK BROOD GERBIL FIZZLE
Answer: He lost all his money playing poker after deciding to — GO FOR BROKE

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HITORI-3276

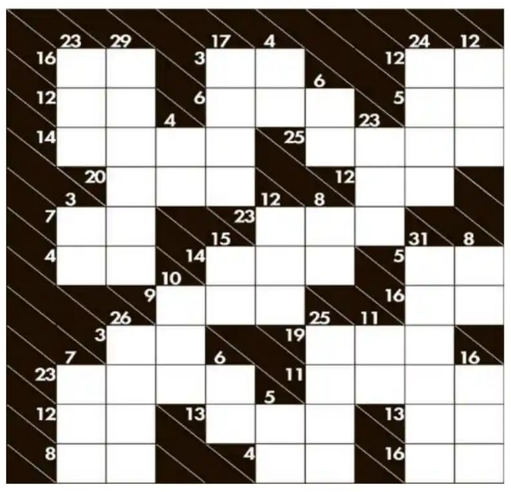
5	7	5	2	4	8	3	5
1	5	8	4	5	6	2	2
3	4	5	1	2	5	6	8
7	2	1	5	6	4	2	5
8	1	6	8	5	7	5	4
6	2	2	3	8	5	5	1
8	5	3	4	2	2	2	7
2	5	2	5	7	3	4	6

SOLUTION TO 3275

5	4	■	2	■	6	8	■
■	8	5	3	7	■	6	1
3	2	■	6	4	7	1	■
2	■	7	■	3	8	■	4
7	6	4	5	8	■	2	3
4	■	3	8	■	1	■	7
8	3	2	■	1	4	7	6
1	■	8	4	5	2	3	■

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3276



SOLUTION TO 3275

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3818

5				6				
			5					7
					8			
					2			
					4	8	6	
	2		7			1		9
		3						6
	5		8			9	4	
	7						5	1

SOLUTION TO 3817

9	5	8	4	1	6	2	7	3
7	6	4	2	3	8	9	1	5
2	1	3	7	9	5	4	6	8
5	8	7	1	4	9	6	3	2
6	9	2	8	7	3	5	4	1
3	4	1	6	5	2	7	8	9
4	7	5	3	2	1	8	9	6
1	2	6	9	8	4	3	5	7
8	3	9	5	6	7	1	2	4

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Last US-Russian nuclear pact expires today

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI: The last remaining nuclear arms pact between Russia and the United States is set to expire on Thursday, removing any caps on the two largest atomic arsenals for the first time in more than a half-century.

The termination of the New START Treaty would set the stage for what many fear could be an unconstrained nuclear arms race. Russian President Vladimir Putin declared readiness to stick to the treaty's limits for another year if Washington follows suit, but President Donald Trump has been noncommittal about extending it.

Iran, US to hold nuclear talks on Friday in Oman

DUBAI, AP/PTI: Talks between Iran and the United States will be held on Friday in Oman, Iranian media reported on Wednesday, as tensions remain high with Washington after Tehran's crackdown on nationwide protests last month.

The semiofficial ISNA and Tasnim news agencies reported the talks would take place in Oman, though the sultanate did not immediately acknowledge it would host them.

US proposes critical minerals trade bloc to counter China

More than 50 countries, including India, join talks on minerals pact

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

The Trump administration wants to create a critical minerals trading bloc with its allies that would use tariffs to maintain price floors and defend against China's tactic of flooding markets to undermine potential competitors.

Vice President JD Vance said on Wednesday that the trade war over the past year exposed how dependent most countries are on critical minerals over which China has a stranglehold.

"We want members to form a trading bloc among allies and partners, one that guarantees American access to American industrial might while also expanding production across the entire zone," Vance said at a meeting of foreign ministers at the State Department.

Critical minerals are needed for everything from jet engines to smartphones, and China dominates the market for many of the materials essential to high-tech products.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (centre) speaks at the Critical Minerals Ministerial Meet in Washington DC on Wednesday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (2nd from right) also took part in the event along with 50 other representatives. PTI

"I think a lot of us have learned the hard way over the last year how much our economies depend on these critical minerals," Vance said at the opening of the meeting hosted by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, which was attended by over 50 ministers from European, Asian and African nations. India was represented by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Earlier this week, President Donald Trump announced Project Vault, a plan to stockpile rare elements, to be funded through a $10 billion loan from the US Export-Import Bank and nearly $1.67 billion in private capital. The US has taken these steps after China, which controls about 70% of the world's rare earths mining and 90% of processing, restricted exports in response to Trump's tariff war.

Vance said some countries had already signed on to the trading bloc. He expressed hope that others would agree to join after the meeting. "Everyone here has a role to play, and that's why we're so grateful for you coming and being part of this gathering, which I hope will lead to not just more gatherings, but action," Rubio said.

Beijing calls for keeping supply chain stable

China, which holds a grip over the critical minerals, on Wednesday called for "jointly" keeping the supply chains stable and secure, PTI reports from Beijing. All sides have a responsibility to play a constructive role to maintain stability and security of global critical mineral industrial and supply chains, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said, reacting to the Critical Minerals meeting hosted by the United States.

India flags challenges of 'excessive concentration' of critical minerals

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, PTI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday underlined the challenges posed by the "excessive concentration" of critical minerals and stressed the importance of de-risking supply chains through structured international cooperation.

Addressing the inaugural Critical Minerals Ministerial in Washington DC, Jaishankar also conveyed India's support for the FORGE initiative on critical minerals. "Spoke at the Critical Minerals Ministerial in Washington DC today. Underlined challenges of excessive concentration and the importance of de-risking supply chains through structured international cooperation," the minister said in a post on X.

Jaishankar also highlighted India's efforts to build greater resilience via initiatives like the National Critical Minerals Mission, Rare Earth Corridors and responsible commerce.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Son of late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi killed

Seif al-Islam Gadhafi, the son and one-time heir apparent of Libya's late dictator Moammar Gadhafi, was killed in the northern African country, AP/PTI reports from Cairo.

Seif al-Islam

The 53-year-old was killed in the town Zintan, 136 kilometres southwest of the capital, Tripoli, according to Libyan's chief prosecutor's office. The office said in a statement that an initial investigation found that Seif al-Islam was shot to death, but did not provide further details about the circumstances of his killing. Khaled al-Zaidi, a lawyer for Seif al-Islam, confirmed his death on Facebook, without providing details. Abdullah Othman Abdurrahim, who represented Gadhafi in the UN-brokered political dialogue which aimed to resolve Libya's long-running conflict, also announced the death on Facebook. Seif al-Islam's political team later released a statement saying that "four masked men" stormed his house and killed him in a "cowardly and treacherous assassination."

Xi, Putin reinforce relationship

Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed his country's growing economic cooperation with China in a video call with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Wednesday, AP/PTI reports from Beijing.

The meeting came in the middle of a series of meetings between Xi and Western leaders who have sought to boost ties with China despite differences over Russia's war in Ukraine. China has continued to trade with Russia, providing some relief from Western sanctions. "I would like to once again assure you of firm support for our shared efforts to ensure the sovereignty and security of our countries," Putin said. Xi said he and Putin would discuss a new "grandiose plan for the development of bilateral ties".

Actress Zoe Bleu attends a premiere for the film "Dracula" in Los Angeles on Tuesday. REUTERS

Washington Post begins layoffs

The Washington Post informed its staff on Wednesday that it was starting a widespread layoff that would gut its sports department and shrink the international footprint, Reuters reports.

The job cuts were announced by Executive Editor Matt Murray on a call with employees, the source said, requesting anonymity. "We will be closing the sports department in its current form," Murray said. The call transcript was shared with Reuters by the source. "All departments are impacted. Politics and government will remain our largest desk and will remain central to our engagement and subscriber growth." The Post did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The move comes days after the newspaper scaled back its coverage of the 2026 Winter Olympics amid mounting financial losses. News outlets are struggling to maintain a sustainable business model after the internet upended the economics of journalism.

Military-backed party declared winner in Myanmar elections

New law may allow army chief to retain influence without formal power

BANGKOK, AP/PTI

Myanmar's military-backed party emerged as the winner of an election, final official figures showed on Wednesday, as the country's army chief signed a law authorising a new body that could allow him to retain influence without formally leading the new government.

The victory of the Union Solidarity and Development Party, led by former generals, was widely expected after the vote excluded major opposition parties. The constitution guarantees 25% of parliamentary seats for the military, effectively ensuring control by the armed forces and allied parties.

Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, head of the military government, was widely expected to assume the presidency when the new parliament convenes. The constitution, however, bars a president from serving concurrently as the army's commander-in-chief—the country's most powerful post—raising questions over whether he would relinquish that role.

The possibility that Min Aung Hlaing might not want to formally lead the new government was highlighted on Wednesday after he signed a law authorising the creation of a new Union Consultative Council, a body that could allow its chairman to wield influence without taking centre stage.

The law, published in the state-run Myanmar Alinn, allows the new president to form the council with at least five members, including a chairman. It says the council could advise and coordinate on national security, international relations, peace processes and legislation, without affecting executive or judicial powers.

Amazon plans to use AI to speed up film production

LOS ANGELES, REUTERS: Amazon plans to use artificial intelligence to speed up the process for making movies and TV shows, even as Hollywood fears that AI will cut jobs and permanently reshape the industry.

At the Amazon MGM Studio, veteran entertainment executive Albert Cheng is leading a team charged with developing new AI tools that he said will cut costs and streamline the creative process. Amazon plans to launch a beta program in March. The company expects to have results by May.

Cheng described AI Studio as a "startup" operating under Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's "two pizza team" philosophy—keeping the group small enough to be fed by two pizzas.

The team consists primarily of product engineers and scientists, with a smaller creative and business contingent.

Russia, Ukraine hold talks in Abu Dhabi

KYIV, AP/PTI

Envoys from Russia and Ukraine met in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday for another round of US-brokered talks on ending the almost four-year war, a Ukrainian negotiator said.

The delegations from Moscow and Kyiv were joined in the United Arab Emirates by US officials, Rustem Umerov, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council chief, who was present at the meeting, said on social media.

Umerov said the planned two-day negotiations started with all three delegations present, after which negotiators were to break into groups according to topics and then meet as a full group again at the end. The American team was due to include special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who also attended last month's meeting, according to the White House.

The current talks also coincide with the expiry of the last remaining nuclear arms pact between Russia and the United States on Thursday. Trump and Putin could extend the terms of the treaty or renegotiate its conditions in an effort to prevent a new nuclear arms race.

Last month's discussions in the Emirati capital, part of a US push to end the fighting, yielded some progress but no breakthrough on key issues, officials said.

The Abu Dhabi talks were held amid Ukrainian outrage over major Russian attacks on its energy system, which have occurred each winter since Russia launched its all-out invasion of its neighbour on Feb 24, 2022.

Gunmen kill nearly 200 in Nigeria attacks

BAUCHI, REUTERS: Nearly 200 people have been killed by armed men in separate attacks on remote villages in central and northern Nigeria, police said on Wednesday, as security forces searched for survivors and pursued the attackers.

In central Kwara state, gunmen attacked the Woro community on Tuesday, leaving at least 170 people dead, the lawmaker for the area, Saidu Baba Ahmed, said by phone.

It was the deadliest assault recorded this year in the district bordering Niger state, an area increasingly targeted by gunmen who raid villages, kidnap residents and loot livestock. Ahmed said the attackers rounded up residents, bound their hands behind their backs and executed them.

Karnataka State Financial Corporation
Branch Office: KSFC Bhavan, Hubli-Dharwad Road, Rayapur, DHARWAD-580 009
Phone BB 0836-2322235 Web : www.ksfc.karnataka.gov.in
E-mail: bmdwd.ksfc@karnataka.gov.in dwd.ksfc@karnataka.gov.in

SALE OF INDUSTRIAL SHED AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDING THROUGH e-AUCTION

I) Industrial Shed of M/s. Arun Industries, Gamanagatti, Hubli for sale:
The assets of M/s. Arun Industries taken over under Section 29 of the SFCs Act, 1951 are available for sale on 'as is where is ' basis through e-auction.
Industrial land measuring 465.00 sqm and building thereon measuring 278.24 sqm situated at Plot No.C-94, Sy.No.208(Part), KSSIDC Industrial Estate, Gamanagatti, Hubballi.
Arun Industries Location
Reserve Price:Rs.95,46,000-00 EMD: Rs.9,54,600-00.
E-auction No.KSFC/2025-26/AUCTION278.

II) Residential Building of A. Ramrao at Azad Park, Keshwapur Hubballi under SARFAESIA for sale :
Notice is hereby given for the sale of residential building belonging to Sri.A. Ramarao described herein below which has been taken possession under the provisions of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(4) read with rule 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 will be sold through **"e-auction".** The interested persons for the purchase of the following assets may participate in the bid through e-auction.
Shri A. Ramrao, Hubballi. - Details of the property as under.
Land & 3 Floored Residential Building thereon Plot No.3 and 4A, situated at RS No.73/A3, Ward No.47, Azad Park, Kusugal Road, Keshwapur, Hubballi land measuring 2 Guntas 15.75 Annas (Plot No.3 measuring 1 gunta 15.75 Annas and Plot No.4A measuring 1 gunta) together with 5700 sq.ft building constructed for residential purpose.
A Rama Rao Location
Reserve Price: 2,16,63,000-00 EMD: Rs.21,66,300-00
E-auction No.KSFC/2025-26/AUCTION280.

Terms and Conditions: (1)The properties will be sold on 'as is where is basis' (2) E-auction opening date and time is 09-03-2026 at 11.00 a.m. and e-auction closing date is 12-03-2026 at 05.00 p.m. (3) Last date and time for payment of EMD is 05-03-2026 at 5.00 p.m. (4) Property may be inspected on 18-02-2026 between 11.00 AM to 4.00 P.M. (5) Any statutory dues such as taxes arrears / payable to HDMC, HESCOM, COMMERCIAL TAX DEPARTMENT, KSSIDC / KIADB etc. and applicable GST on the properties shall be borne by the buyer. The buyer has to make his/her own enquiry on the statutory dues if any on the shops of his/her interest. (6) Any litigation of the property is subject to Hubballi Jurisdiction. (7)KSFC has every right to accept or reject any bids without assigning any reason at any point of time. (8) In case of any ambiguities arising in this notification the decision of KSFC is final. (9) Promoters / guarantors / collateral security owners are requested to bring their prospective buyers for better price, above reserved price, and to participate in the E-auction. (10)E-auction will be held through website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For other terms and conditions of e-auction please visit the said website. (11) For further information please contact **Assistant General Manager on mobile No.9900231967.**
Place : Dharwad
Date : 04-02-2026
Sd/- Authorised Officer
Assistant General Manager

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ, ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಕಛೇರಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಹಳೆ ಕ್ಷಯರೋಗಿಗಳ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ ಆವರಣ, ಹಳೇ ಮದ್ರಾಸ್ ರಸ್ತೆ, ಇಂದಿರಾನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು – 38. ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 25202265.
dhobangaloreurban-hfws@karnataka.gov.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಜಿಆಕುಕ/ಆಡಳಿತ/02/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02.02.2026
ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಗೆ 2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ಶುಚಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಡಿ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಇರುವ ಸ್ಯಾನಿಟರಿ ಪ್ಯಾಡ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ಕೆಟಿಪಿಪಿ ನಿಯಮಾನುಸಾರ E-Procurement ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಕರೆದಿದ್ದು. https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯವರು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ್ನು ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ದಿ:02–02–2026 ರಿಂದ ದಿ:16–02–2026 ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ 05:30 ಗಂಟೆವರೆಗೂ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ, ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಹಳೇ ಟಿ ಬಿ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ ಆವರಣ, ಇಂದಿರಾನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು – 560038 ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.
ಸಹಿ/– ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು ಕ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು,
ಡಿಐಪಿಆರ್/ಪಿಪಿ/5426/ಪಿಪಿಎಲ್/2025–26 ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited
(Wholly owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
(CIN - UO4010KA2002SGC030438)
TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Platform)
BESCOM invites tender against Enquiry No. BESCOM/2025-26/BD/WORKS_INDENT 844 for Providing lift to existing division office building, Construction of third floor to accommodate Meeting hall and other allied civil engineering works in on going W-6 Sub division, Byatarayanapura, BESCOM, Bengaluru. **Estimated amount:** Rs.190.00 Lakhs. **Estimated Amount put to tender (Appx):** Rs.161.00 Lakhs. **EMD:** Rs.2.42 Lakhs. Pre bid Meeting date and time: 13.02.2026 @ 15.00 Hrs. Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications: **17.02.2026 up to 17.30 Hrs**. Last Date & Time for Receipts: **21.02.2026 up to 11.00 Hrs**. Date & Time of Opening Technical bid: **23.02.2026 at 11.30 Hrs**. Date & Time of Opening Price bid: Will be intimated after technical evaluation to the responsive bidder. The details regarding participation in the tender can be obtained through kpp portal by visiting website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **06.02.2026**.
For any clarification contact e-procurement helps desk +91-80-46010000, +91-8068948777 or e-mail to support@ihelpdsk.com.
Sd/- Chief Engineer (Ele), Bangalore Metropolitan Area South Zone, BESCOM, Bengaluru.
For electricity related complaints call 1912
Download BESCOM Mithra MOBILE APP

INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AUCTION BANGALORE LIMITED
#24, BELLARY ROAD, HEBBAL, Bengaluru-560024
Phone:- 8431235858 / 8431235867
E-Mail:- ifablimited@gmail.com, Website :-www.ifabindia.org
No.IFAB/2025-26/SE0031 DATE:29.01.2026
TENDER FOR RENTAL OCCUPANCY FOR Floral Mall AT FLORAL STUDIO AT IFAB
Two bid system online tenders are invited through Karnataka e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in,** by IFAB Ltd., for Rental Occupancy of **Floral mall** of floral studio, from the interested parties. The documents are available in the Karnataka e-Procurement Portal only from 29.01.2026 and last date for bid submission is on **28.02.2026 till 5.00PM.**
Sd/-
Managing Director
DIPR/CP/5419/SSC/2025-26

KELADI SHIVAPPA NAYAKA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL & HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES.
Office of Estate Officer, Main Premises, Iruvakki 577412, Shivamogga District
Ph.No :**9480838979**, E-mail: **eo@uahs.edu.in**
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : ಕೆತಿನಾಕೃತೋವಿವಿ(ಇ)/ಆ.ಅ/ಉಖಿಅ/20/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ : 30.01.2026
Tender Notification
(Through e-procurement portal only)
Tenders have been invited from the registered eligible firms as per Standard Tender Document K G-3 procedure to supply necessary Equipments to Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Iruvakki, Shivamogga. Tender notification schedule and tender details are available in the website.
Tender schedule dates are as follows:
1.Last date and time for submission of tender: **25.02.2026 upto 4.00 P M. 2.**Date and time of opening of Technical bid : **26.02.2026 at 4.30 P M. 3.** Date and time of opening of Financial bid : **28.02.2026 at 10.00 A M.**
Details can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours. Tenderers need to register with e-procurement portal and to obtain user ID and password for participating in e-procurement portal. For more details, contact e-portal website email id : **hphelpdesk.blr.intarvo.com** or helpline No.: +91 8046010000 on all working days and the Warehouse Purchase Officer, Central Warehouse, Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Iruvakki, Anandapura, Sagar Taluq, Shivamogga – 577 412.
Sd/-
Estate Officer, Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural & Horticultural Sciences, Iruvakki, Shivamogga
DIPR/SMG/No- 18-02/zenkar/2025-26

AUCTION NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of vehicles.
1) CB_Ashok Leyland Dost GOODS YOM – 2024 Reg No – KA11C7291
2) CB_AL_BADA_DOST YOM – 2024 Reg No – KA11C8497
3) CB_AL_BADA_DOST YOM – 2023 Reg No – KA27C6245
4) CB_Tata SFC 407 Fully Built YOM – 2022 Reg No – KA01AN3786
5) CB_AL_BADA_DOST YOM – 2023 Reg No – KA28AA9547
6) CB_Escorts JCB 3DX Excavator Loader YOM – 2023 Reg No – KA26N7165
7) TATA MOTORS LTD. – CB_TATA Ace YOM – 2024 Reg No – KA33B6328
8) CB_MARUTI SUPER CARRY YOM – - Reg No – KA04AD5883
9) CB_MARUTI SUPER CARRY YOM – 2023 Reg No – KA19AE1109
10) CB_MAHINDRA_BOLERO_MAXXCITY_PICKUP YOM – - Reg No – KA16AB0480
11) ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED - U-3123T-5250MM YOM – 2018 Reg No – KA28D0920
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION"
INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION i.e. from 05.02.2026
(Please note that closing Auction date would not be a Weekly off / Holiday)
BRANCH ADDRESS:
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD.,
22, MG ROAD, BANGALORE
KARNATAKA – 560001
OR
Contact: Arunlaxman Kokare
Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.
Contact / 080 - 61564249

Anthropic's new AI tool drags down IT stocks

Nifty IT plunges nearly 6% amid investor worries

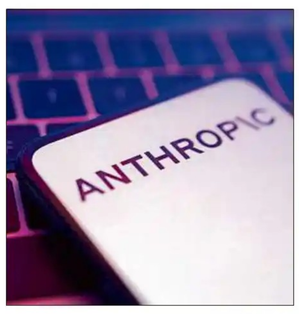
UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

IT stocks witnessed heavy selling pressures on Wednesday, following concerns over AI firm Anthropic's latest tool that can automate legal work. Concerned over AI competition, software stocks were hit across Europe and the US. On Wednesday, Nifty IT plunged nearly 6%, its steepest fall in six years.

"This steepest fall was amid investor worries over AI competition for software firms, following Anthropic's legal tool launch for Claude AI. IT heavyweights Infosys, TCS, and HCLTech faced selling pressure as top losers," Nandish Shah, Deputy Vice President, HDFC Securities, said.

Infosys shares fell over 7% and settled at Rs 1,535.90 on the BSE, TCS and HCLTech shares were down 6.95% and 4.22%, respectively.

Sumit Pokharna, VP Fundamental Research, Kotak Securities said Indian IT stocks slid in tandem with Wall Street, mirroring the overnight sell-off in US technology shares. "It may be premature to draw sweeping conclusions. The impact of such AI innovations is unlikely to be uniform across all IT verticals, and many segments could remain largely insulated in the near term.



For now, the market reaction appears driven more by sentiment than by clear evidence of structural disruption," Pokharna said.

IT services firms are of the view that advanced AI tools are an opportunity and not a threat. Ashok Soota, Chairman and Chief Mentor, Happiest Minds Technologies, said, "These developments represent a significant opportunity for Happiest Minds and not a threat."

He views Anthropic's innovation as a catalyst for growth, reinforcing the essential role of IT services in guiding organisations through technological transformation. "There is a lot of excitement around AI platforms and plugins, and rightly so since that they drastically lower the entry barrier for creating software. However, this does not reduce the need for companies like ours. In fact, it enhances the same," Soota said, adding that every major disruption, right from SaaS to cloud computing, has in fact expanded the role of IT services.

"This is exactly how digital disruption took centre-stage around 2010 and we were in the thick of it. Now, with our AI First program, we are once again at the forefront of this new era," he said.

During the company's Q4 earnings conference, Ravi Kumar S, CEO, Cognizant, said any tech disruption will take away jobs of the past and create significantly more jobs in the future. He views such new AI tools as a tailwind to companies like Cognizant.

> "There is a lot of excitement around AI platforms and plugins, and rightly so since that they drastically lower the entry barrier for creating software. However, this does not reduce the need for companies like ours.
> **ASHOK SOOTA,** Chairman and Chief Mentor, Happiest Minds Technologies

"I have a strong belief that the paradox of doing more for less will actually get you more. There is going to be new software written and it will not be around the microprocessor, but it will be around the LLM (large language models). And this new software is action-oriented, and has advanced reasoning," he said.

US trade deal to provide advantage to Indian exporters, says Goyal

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said the proposed trade deal with the US would provide a significant comparative advantage to Indian exporters, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.

"This partnership will unlock new opportunities for MSMEs, entrepreneurs, skilled workers, and industry, enable access to advanced technologies, and support India's vision to Make in India for the world, Design in India for the world, and Innovate in India for the world," Goyal told Lok Sabha.

Piyush Goyal

As part of the proposed deal, the US has announced to lower tariff on import of Indian goods to 18%, from the current 50%.

"I wish to underline that this rate is lower than the tariffs imposed by the US on several competing countries, thereby enhancing India's export competitiveness in the US market," the minister said.

"The agreement also provides significant comparative advantage to Indian exporters, particularly in labour-intensive sectors and manufacturing," he added.

US President Donald Trump made an announcement regarding the deal following a telephoning conversation with PM Narendra Modi earlier this week. However, details of the deal are yet to be worked out. Goyal informed Parliament that India and the US would "now work together to complete the necessary technical processes and finalise the paperwork related to the trade deal".

"The detailed contours of the agreement will be announced shortly after completion of these processes," he said.

He reiterated that interests of sensitive sectors like agriculture and dairy would be protected. "I wish to reiterate to this august House that India's core sensitivities in food and agriculture have been fully safeguarded," Goyal said.

Cognizant net profit up 18.7%, revenue at $5.3 bn

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Nasdaq-listed IT services firm Cognizant on Wednesday reported an 18.7% increase in its net profit for the quarter ended December 2025 at $648 million. The company, which follows the calendar year, posted $546 million net profit in the year-ago period.

Cognizant beat its Q4 revenue guidance by reporting fourth quarter revenue of $5.33 billion, a 4.9% YoY increase compared to $5.08 billion revenue in the same quarter last year.

The firm expects first quarter revenue to be $5.36-5.44 billion, a growth of 4.8% to 6.3%, while full-year 2026 revenue is expected to be $22.14-22.66 billion, a growth of 4.9% to 7.4%, or 4% to 6.5% in constant currency.

During the company's post-earnings press conference, Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar S said they signed 28 large deals in 2025 with large deal TCV (total contract value) growth of nearly 50% year-on-year. "We continue on our trajectory of non-linearity of revenue and margins. We have added 14,000 employees, which is roughly 4% of our workforce. We actually added 6.4% revenues for a 4% workforce. The non-linearity is showing up in our model. We are adding people at the bottom of the pyramid. Last year, we added 19,000 people at the bottom of the pyramid," the CEO said.

The company is also adding more freshers. In 2025, it added 20,000 of them, of whom 16,000 are already helping customers. "About 4,000 are undergoing training, and for 2026, we plan to increase this by 20% so we will be hiring 24,000-25,0000," Cognizant CFO Jatin Dalal said.

"In 2025, we outperformed the high end of our guidance ranges, combining top-tier revenue growth with 50 basis points of expanded adjusted operating margin and 11% adjusted EPS growth," Dalal said.

"Our operational rigour allowed us to maintain a robust free cash flow conversion of more than 100% of net income and return $2 billion to shareholders. Our initial 2026 guidance reflects sustained momentum, backed by our commitment to advancing our strategic investments aimed at accelerating our AI-led growth strategy," the CFO added.

The company's full-year 2025 revenue stood at $21.1 billion, a 7% YoY increase and its full-year operating margin was 16.1%. The company's headcount also increased by 14,800 employees YoY and its voluntary attrition-tech services stood at 13.9%.

INTERVIEW

'Procedural changes in I-T laws to reduce litigation'

The Union Budget 2026-27 does not make any changes to the income tax (I-T) slabs and rates. However, several procedural changes have been announced, including increased time to file revised returns and partial decriminalisation of income tax offences. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has also announced that the Income Tax Act, 2025, would come into force from April 1, 2026. In an interview with *DH*'s **Gyanendra Keshri**, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman **Ravi Agrawal** talks about the proposed changes in the new tax rules. He also delves into issues impacting refunds and the rationale for increase in the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) announced in the Budget.

Edited excerpts:

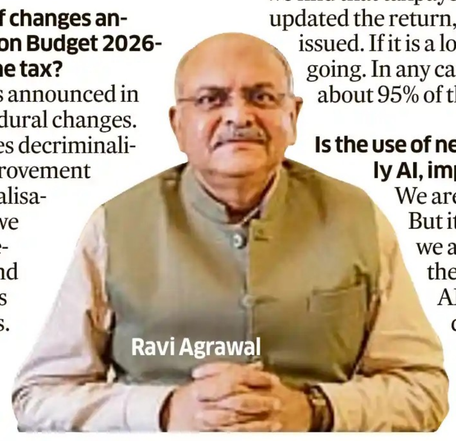
What are the key changes expected in the income tax rules with the implementation of the new Act from April?
The new Act is essentially simplification of language, consolidation of proposals and reduction of redundancies. It will make it simpler for the taxpayer to understand, comprehend and present the issues in a more presentable form. While drafting the new regulation, essentially the idea was to make it easy for the people to understand, so as to minimise litigation and scope for multiple interpretations.

What is the focus of changes announced in the Union Budget 2026-27 related to income tax?
The set of proposals announced in the Budget is procedural changes. It essentially involves decriminalisation, process improvement and timeline rationalisation. For example, we have decided to integrate assessment and penalty proceedings into a single process. These are essentially aimed at strengthening the overall experience of the people's tax compliance and reducing litigation.

The announcement on the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) led to a sharp drop in the stock markets. What is the reason for the hike in STT rates?
The STT is proposed to be increased only on futures and options. These are highly-speculative domains. The volume is growing exponentially. Futures and options trading volume is now 500 times the GDP of the country. On the one hand of the spectrum, you have a retail investor, and on the other, there is algo trading. In this process, the majority of retail investors are losing money. So the idea is to discourage this highly-speculative trading.

What kind of additional revenue the STT hike is expected to generate?
The revenue is dependent on the volume. Our expectation is that with the increase in tax rates, the volume may go down. Our objective is not revenue, but protection of investors.

There have been a lot of complaints from tax-payers about delays in refunds. What is the status of refunds?
It's not that we are not issuing refunds. It is delayed if there are discrepancies. When we find that taxpayers have responded and updated the return, the refunds are being issued. If it is a low-risk case, refunds are going. In any case, we have already sent about 95% of the refunds.


Ravi Agrawal

Is the use of new technology, especially AI, impacting refunds?
We are extensively using AI. But it is not the only thing we are depending on. Once there is a red flag through AI, eyeball-checking is also done. There is proper filtering. We check the profile of the red-flagged tax-payers, then action is taken.

RBI guv to announce rate decision tomorrow

MUMBAI, PTI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra-headed six-member rate-setting panel on Wednesday, started deliberations on the next set of bi-monthly interest rates in the backdrop of growth-focused Union Budget and announcement of the India-US trade deal, which lifted market sentiments.

The decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced by Malhotra on Friday morning.

Experts opine that the RBI has already reduced the key short-term lending rate (repo) by 125 basis points since last February, and may go for status quo on rates, as there are no pressing concerns on either growth or inflation fronts.

However, some feel that the central bank may go for one more rate cut to further reduce borrowing costs.

An SBI research report said that since the last MPC in December, one of the major policy changes is the EU-India and US-India trade deals, resulting in a reduction in tariffs on India to 18% from 50% earlier.

A BofA Global Research note said the RBI's rate-cutting cycle appears to be over for now.

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY & DRAINAGE BOARD
KALABURAGI ZONE, KALABURAGI
Office of the Chief Engineer KUWS & D Board, Kalaburagi Zone,
"Jalbhavan", Rajapur, Kusnoor Road, Kalaburagi - 585105. Tel : 08472-220817,
Fax : 08472-260818 E-mail ID : kwbceklb14@gmail.com

No. KWB/CE(K)/TEC/WSS/Balagnur AMRUT 2.0/2025-26/1497 Date : 03-02-2026

-: NOTICE INVITING TENDER :-

1) Detail of Work: Providing Improvement to the Water Supply Scheme to Balaganur Town under AMRUT 2.0 Including Operation & Maintenance for a period of 5 years (including 1 year DLP) through design, build, operation and transfer (DBOT) mode. (Lumpsum Tender – No Variation **(Work Indent No : KUWSDB/2025-26 /WS /WORK_INDENT488)**, 2) Amount of Estimate: **Rs. 2023.46 Lakhs (Excluding GST)** (Capex: Rs. 1851.38 Lakhs, Opex: Rs.172.08 Lakhs), 3) Eligibility of Contractor: Eligible Contractors, 4) Details of Tender application amount and EMD amount: Rs. 20,23,000/-, 5) Period of Completion: 18 (Eighteen) Months (Including Monsoon), 6) Date and Time for commencement of downloading of tender documents from the e-procurement portal: **06-02-2026 after 17:00 Hours**, 7) Date & Time of Pre-Bid Meeting : **21-02-2026 at 11:30 Hours**, 8) Last Date and Time for receipt of Tenders: **09-03-2026 Up to 17:30 Hours**, 9) Date and Time for Opening of Tender : **11-03-2026 After 11:00 Hours** 10) Addl. information: Office of the Chief Engineer, KUWS & D Board, Kalaburagi Zone, "Jalbhavan", Rajapur, Kusnoor Road, Telephone: 08472-220817, E-mail ID : kwbceklb14@gmail.com, 11) Address of E-portal: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Chief Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1045/KSMC&A/2025-26 **KUWS & D Board, Kalaburagi Zone, Kalaburagi**

THE HUTTI GOLD MINES COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Hutti - 584 115, Raichur Dist., Karnataka State. Ph: (08537)276339/275463
e-Mail: material276339@gmail.com website: www.huttigold.karnataka.gov.in

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.32/25-26 Dt: 05.02.2026
(Through KPP Portal only)

Tender is invited by "The I/c. Dy. General Manager (Materials)" for the following Tenders as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Description	EMD in Rs.
1	Supply of Siemens PLC controller and IO modules. **HGML/2025-26/IND0347/CALL-3**	25,000/-
2	Supply of 8 inch HDPE Pipe with Flange. **HGML/2025-26/IND0428**	65,000/-
3	Supply of 3.5 Core 120 SQ MM of 3.3 KV HT Double Wire Armoured Copper cable. **HGML/2025-26/IND0409/CALL-2**	1,93,000/-
4	Supply of Pneumatic torque wrench. **HGML/2025-26/IND0414**	26,000/-
5	Supply of Sodium Hydroxide Flakes. **HGML/2025-26/IND0422**	50,000/-
6	Supply of Power Module spares for winder system. **HGML/2024-25/IND0285/CALL-3.**	52,000/-
7	Supply of Examination Couch Regular. **HGML/2025-26/IND0368/CALL-3**	16,000/-
8	Supply of Spirometer with all the standard accessories. **HGML/2025-26/IND0431**	15,000/-
9	Supply of spare items for existing Allen Bradley make DCS. **HGML/2025-26/IND0444**	82,500/-
10	Construction of E Waste storage room (SC category). **HGML/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT122/CALL-2**	40,000/-

Calendar of events: (1) Last date for receipt of tender: **19.02.2026 at 4.00 P.M. (2)** Opening of Technical Bid on: **21.02.2026 at 10.00 AM.** For further details interested bidders are advised to logon to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPP portal.

Sd/- The I/c Deputy General Manager (Materials)

LEADING GOLD PRODUCER IN INDIA

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP portal only)

BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible contractors for the following Works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

Division	IFT Number	Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last Date & Time for submission of tender	Date & Time for opening of tender
WWM-P-H&A Valley	BWSSB/EE(WWM-P)-H&AV/AEE(WWM-P-H&AV)-1/AE/1770/2025-26 Date : 30.01.2026 (3rd Call)	Rs.32,10,442/- / Rs.64,210/-	12-02-2026 upto 5.00 p.m.	13-02-2026 at 5.00 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (WWM-P) H&A Valley.

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.

South-1	BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/3619/2025-26 Date : 28.01.2026	Rs.14,60,253/- / Rs.36,600/-	12-02-2026 upto 4.00 p.m.	16-02-2026 after 4.00 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-1).

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/AAPL/RO5422/25-26

KARNATAKA SILK INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
3rd & 4th Floors, Public Utility Building, M.G. Road, Bangalore – 560 001.
Ph: 080- 25586550/25586402 Email: info@ksicsilk.com

No: KSIC/PR/ITEMS-W/2025-26 **Date: 02.02.2026**

NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal only)

Tenders are invited through KPP Portal from Manufacturers/Dealers for the below detailed items & work:

Sl. No.	Particulars	EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date for uploading the Tender	Opening of Technical Bids
1.	Tender for Procurement of Provision Items for Canteen at SWF, Mysuru for a period of six months.	31,000/-	06.03.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	07.03.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
2.	Tender for Replacing of Aeration Pipe Lines, Water Lines, Suction Pipe Lines and Railings in CETP & Supply, Installation of 04 Nos. Magnetic Inflow Meter for CETP at SWF, Mysuru Unit.	13,000/-	06.03.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	07.03.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
3.	Re-Tender for Supply of 600 Kgs of Sara Guard 2875 for KSIC, SWF, Mysuru Unit.	17,000/-	16.02.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	17.02.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
4.	Tender for Entrusting Work towards Re-Routing of Soft Water Line From Softener Unit to Dyeing, Soaking and VHS Sections at SWF, Mysuru Unit.	12,000/-	06.03.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	07.03.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.

Tender documents, details of the Notification, schedule, terms & conditions can be downloaded from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Further details can be had from office of the Undersigned during working hours or KPP Portal help desk - 080-46010000 /080-68948777.

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/5296/MAA/2025-26 **GENERAL MANAGER (Proc)**

Government of Karnataka
Office of the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation And Ground Water Development Division, Ballari

IFT No. EE/MI & GWDD/Bly/AE-2/2025-26/1925 **Date : 28.01.2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION (KW-4)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka the Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development Division Ballari invited the tender for the work of under **Head for Account 4702 Plan APB** 1 work in Ballari taluk and Dist in Two Cover System **Estimated amount put to tender is Rs.200.93 lakhs** the tenderers should download and submitt the tenders from **date : 29.01.2026 to 27.02.2026 upto 17.30 hours. Date & Time of opening Technical Bid is on 03.03.2026 at 11.00 hours. Opening of Financial Bid is on 05.03.2026 at 11.00 hours**. Any other information should get by login the website **"KPPP"** http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
M.I. & G.W.D. Division, Ballari.
DIPR/Ballari/961/KSMCA/2025-26

Government of Karnataka
Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Bagalkot
Tel Phone.: 08354- 235042 E-mail ID: bgkeezpe@yahoo.com Fax: 08354-235043

No: EE/PRED/BGK/PB-1,2,3/Tender/2025-26/5488 **Date: 03.02.2026**

SHORT TENDER NOTIFICATION (One & Two Cover System) (KW-1, 2 & 3 Bid Document)

Tender Called for the Work in the above notification through E-mode tendering is read as below.

Item rate Tender under two cover bid system is invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement **ACT 1999** and **Rules 2000 STANDARD BID DOCUMENT KW-4** through Public electronic Tendering System (E-Tender from Class-1, 2, 3 contractor (Civil) registered in **KPWD,** Who have got adequate financial resources, State of Technology, Suitable Construction equipments technical man Power & Sufficient past Experience for the following Work as per Schedule Given Below.

Tender Called for ಸನ್2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ವಿವಿಧ ಲೆಕ್ಕಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆಯಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ, ಬೀಳಗಿ, ಹುನಗುಂದ, ಮುಧೋಳ, ರಬಕವಿ ಬನಹಟ್ಟಿ, ಹಾಗೂ ಬಾದಾಮಿ ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ

Scheme Under Work Indent No:
ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ನಂ: 22142/CALL-2, 18132/CALL-2, 2286, 0705/CALL-2, 23972, 23813, 23894
ಪ್ರವರ್ಗ–2 (ಎ) ವರ್ಗದ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಯ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 22138/CALL-2, 22787, 17067/CALL-2, 23787
ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ ವರ್ಗದ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆಯ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 22156/CALL-2, 22862, 24076, 18785

ಇದ್ದು, ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ವಿವರ, ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ, ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರ ಅರ್ಹತೆ ವಿವರ, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮೊತ್ತ **(ರೂ.6.00 ದಿಂದ 90.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳ ಮಿತಿಗೊಳಪಟ್ಟು),** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿಯ ಬೆಲೆ ಮತ್ತು ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ ಎಲ್ಲ ವಿವರಗಳು ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದ್ದಂತೆ. read as below.

Calendar of event

1	**Request of blank Tender Documents and receipt of Completed Technical & Financial Bid through e-procurement**	**Dt:04.02.2026 to 17.02.2026 at 5.30pm**
2	**Opening of Technical Bid Date** (ದ್ವಿ ಲಕೋಟೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಅನ್ವಯಿಸುತ್ತದೆ.)	**Dt:19.02.2026 at 11.00 am**
3	**Opening of Financial Bid Date**	**Technical Bid Approved.**

Note:-More details can be obtained through website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the below signed Office during the office hours. **Phone No: 08354-235042**

ಪಾ.ಸಾ.ಇ/ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ/557/ದೇಶಪಾಂಡೆಪಬ್ಲಿಸಿಟಿ/2025–26 ಸಹಿ/– ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರರು, ಪಂಚಾಯತ ರಾಜ್ (ಇ)ವಿಭಾಗ, ಬಾಗಲಕೋಟೆ.

Children swim in the spring water at Mudnur in Yadgir district.

Springs that shaped a valley

Divyashri Mudakavi writes about the plains of Yadgir, where water bodies have sustained human life, ecosystems and agriculture for millennia

The natural water spring at Vajjala in Yadgir district.

When we think of natural water springs, the mind usually travels to misty hills and forested ghats. Far less attention is paid to springs in the plains, which have played an equally crucial role in sustaining life for millions of years. The Hunasagi–Baichbal valley of Yadgir district is one such landscape. Here, seep springs and water pools have supported continuous human occupation since prehistoric times.

The major water body that has sustained life here is the Hunasagi stream fed by several shallow streams, including the Baichbal stream. The southwest monsoon, between June and September, replenishes the stream and smaller water bodies. But once the rains cease, the area would quickly dry up — were it not for two enduring features: perennial pools in the stream beds and seep springs.

These pools, often formed at bends and meanders, can be seen at Maralbhavi, Kupi, Fatehpur, and Kembhavi. Seep springs originate from places where sedimentary formations meet underlying Archaean granite-gneiss, at Mudnur, Vajjala, Maralbhavi, Hagartagi and other villages. Even today, these pools and springs not only provide clean drinking water but are actively used by local communities for agriculture during the dry season.

Some springs at Mudnur, Vajjala and Kalagi (in adjacent Kalaburagi district) are surrounded by temples built in the 12th century by the Kalyani Chalukyas. These sacred sites reflect the importance earlier generations placed on conservation. "Springs at Isampur and Vajjala feed the Hunasagi stream throughout the year, while those at Mudnur sustain local drainage channels. These springs provide a reliable source of fresh water once the monsoon ends, making them central to both past and present habitation," says S K Aruni, a Shahpur-based history researcher.

Geological antiquity

Archaeologists note that the springs in the Hunasagi–Baichbal basin are not a recent phenomenon. "Extensive travertine deposits, over three metres thick, are found at Devapur, Kaladevanahalli and Mudnur. Formed by long-term spring activity, these deposits show that the springs existed even in prehistoric times," says archaeologist K Paddayya, who has extensively studied early settlements in the region.

The spring water that enters a 12th century temple at Vajjala is locally called as Ramateertha. PHOTOS BY BHIMASHENRAO K KULKARNI

According to him, the consistent availability of water enabled continuous human presence over millions of years. "By the Lower Palaeolithic period (3.3 million to 0.3 million years ago), humans had developed stone-tool technology. The Hunasagi–Baichbal tertiary amphitheater-like basin, with its perennial water sources, limestone for tools, gentle terrain, abundant food and low surrounding hills, provided an ideal environment for long and uninterrupted occupation," Paddayya explains.

He adds that early communities adapted their settlement patterns to the seasons: during the wet season, they spread across the valley, while in dry months they concentrated near springs and pools. Large animals that visited water sources were hunted during the dry season, while plant foods and small animals became a dietary staple when resources were plentiful.

Today, these springs continue to nurture local communities. "Water from a spring at Devapur is supplied to part of Hunasigi town, while another one serves villages like Vajjala. The Hunasagi stream waters nearby fields in an otherwise dry area," says Nagappa Hadikyal, a former government officer involved in local water projects.

He adds that while water could be supplied from the left bank canal of the Upper Krishna Project, which is just 15 kilometre away, locals prefer spring water as it is sweeter and available year-round.

Mohanchandra Huddar, an Ayurvedic doctor and history enthusiast, citing Paddayya's studies, says that the valleys once supported savannah woodland with dense gallery forests along streams. They had nearly 50 species of wild plant foods — leafy greens, fruits and berries, indicating a rich and varied plant base for prehistoric communities. Fossilised bones of cattle, horses, elephants and deer show that wildlife was also plentiful.

In the subsequent agropastoral period, humans developed simple water-storage systems, similar to check dams, to harness spring water for agriculture. But today, forest patches and medicinal plants that grew naturally around springs have shrunk substantially, he says.

"Until a few decades ago, crops here were cultivated through natural farming. Seasonal crops were irrigated by spring water, but with Krishna-based irrigation, farmers switched to water-intensive paddy and chemical inputs, polluting smaller streams. This large-scale shift towards paddy has also affected the crop diversity in the area, degrading soil health," Huddar observes.

He adds that drainage water is also being released into the Hunasagi stream, impacting the entire habitat. "Though the spring water emanating from the aqueduct is clean, water in the stream and in the structures built around the spring to regulate and trap the water, are getting contaminated. These anthropogenic pressures threaten a valley that has sustained life for millions of years," he says, urging government authorities to step in.

While the springs and pools continue to act as significant geological features, ecological refuges and anchors of one of the Deccan's longest records of human occupation, their importance remains largely unrecognised. Few studies have explored these springs and the streams they feed, or examined ways to promote sustainable water and agriculture practices for the valley's future.

Bukka Raya's inscription at Kalya

A field visit and an archival trail help Kirti Malhotra uncover a 14th-century pact between Vaishnavas and Jains, and a king's efforts to reconcile

When I visited the Lingayat Math at Kempasagara in Ramanagara district, I was told that most of its priests, at the turn of the 20th century, had shifted to another math on a small hill in Kalya. On my return journey, a signboard in Magadi town reading 'Kalya Gate' caught my eye. Acting on impulse, I got down and walked six kilometres to reach Kalya.

The Lingayat Math at Kalya, popularly known as the Jangama Math, stands in an area called 'Naalku Kallu Mantapa'. Walking through the area overgrown with weeds, I climbed a hillock to reach the Math complex. As I entered, a huge and serene courtyard engulfed me. The pillars, though bearing beautiful carvings, had been heavily plastered. As dusk fell, I decided to explore Kalya in detail another day.

At the village bus stop, a series of posters about Kalya's history sparked my curiosity. Back home, I turned to online archival materials and soon came across the Archaeological Survey of Mysore (ASM) report for 1892-93. It spoke about Kallehada-pattana mentioned in an interesting 'Ramanujachari inscription' at 'Sravana Belgola' (now Shravanabelagola). The inscription records how the Jainas (Jains) complained to Bukka-Raya (Bukka Raya I) of Vijayanagar (Vijayanagara) of obstruction from the Vaishnavas and how the king reconciled the disputes. Kallehada-pattana, as per ASM, 'has now been clearly identified with Kalya near Magadi'. ASM also states that 'a duplicate of the Ramanujachari inscription has been found' at Kalya.

The earliest reference of this inscription appears in the accounts of the Jainas collected from a priest of the sect at Mudgeri for Major C Mackenzie, published in the form of a report in 1809 AD.

The complete text of the Shravanabelagola inscription was published in *Inscriptions at Sravana Belgola* by B Lewis Rice in 1889 AD while the *Epigraphia Carnatica* (EC Vol 2), 1923 refers to the inscription at Kalya as 'another version' of the one at Shravanabelagola. The text of Kalya's inscription was found in EC Vol 9, 1905. Both inscriptions date to 1368 AD.

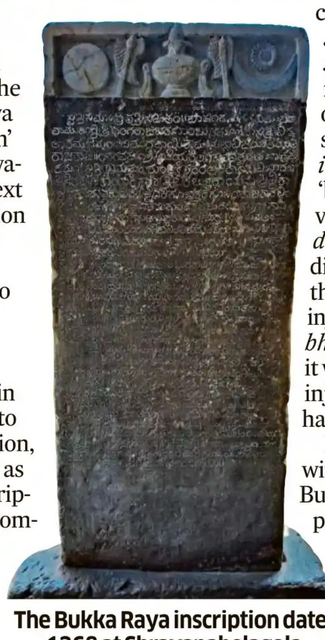
Having learnt more about these inscriptions, I again travelled to Kalya to locate the inscription, commonly known as Bukka Raya's inscription stone. I met Bomma Lingaiah, the present owner of the fields where the stone stands erect. I later learnt that a few years ago, a team from The Mythic Society traced nine unpublished inscriptions at Kalya. Probably then, a neat enclosure was built around this inscription, with an information board explaining its importance. However, the board has now disappeared, and the enclosure lies in ruins.

The Bukka Raya inscription dated 1368 at Kalya.

Returning with a heavy heart, that such an important inscription is again in peril, I decided to see the condition of the 'original' inscription at Shravanabelagola. An early morning bus took me to Channarayapatna and then to Belagola. At the Bhandari Basadi, I found the inscription stone safely housed within the inner enclosure, protected from sun and rain.

Conflicts have always been there in the history of humankind, but here was a rare inscription recording an earnest effort to resolve one of them. On continued search, I found a research paper by noted historian Dr Chidananda Murthy, published in 1988. This paper made an interesting observation: the Kalya text is the 'original one' and the Belagola text is a 'modified, softened and enlarged' one. Regardless, both inscriptions record a pact made by Vira Bukka Raya between the Vaishnavas and the Jainas, by placing the hands of the Jainas on the hands of the Vaishnavas and that 'the Vaishnava creed would continue to protect the Jaina *darsana*'. *Darsana* here refers to religious processions of devotees visiting shrines. The *Epigraphia Carnatica*, records 'between the Vaishnavas *darsana* and Jaina *darsana*, there is no difference'; that 'if to the Jaina darsana any injury on the part of the *bhaktas* should arise, it will be protected as if injury to the Vaishnavas had arisen.'

In a world ridden with conflicts today, Bukka Raya's attempt at pointing to the oneness of all the religions and decreeing that people of one religion must protect the other is worth emulating.



The Bukka Raya inscription dated 1368 at Shravanabelagola. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to: spectrum@deccanherald.co.in

Stories from the land, to be staged for a new generation

At a playwriting workshop in rural Karnataka, children and adults draw inspiration from folklore and lived experience, writes Shradha Triveni

When do we tell a story?

"To make people sleep"; "To trick people."

These were among the responses offered by children at a playwriting workshop held at Ajji's Learning Centre (ALC), a non-profit educational trust, tucked into the quiet hamlet of Jyothipalya in Magadi taluk of Ramanagara district, a little over an hour's bus ride from Bengaluru.

These responses nudged the organisers to the fundamentals of storytelling.

"How can our surroundings, the stories of our land, our people and folklore, passed orally through generations, give birth to new, empowering narratives? That was the premise of our workshop," said Akshay Gowtham, theatre artiste and coordinator of the 10-day workshop *Srishti Mattu Samudayada Kathana*.

Conceived as a response to childhoods shaped by reel culture, the workshop, held recently, sought to draw instead from folk songs, folktales and lived experiences rooted in regional language and culture. Akshay and playwright Kotiganahalli Ramaiah designed the workshop to nurture playwriting, dealing with the subject of adolescence.

It aimed to train aspiring writers of children's plays and to develop their scripts in collaboration with contemporary theatre directors for stage production. What set it apart was their willingness to experiment and not rely on conventional classics.

Over ten days, participants from mixed age groups gathered at the earthy space of ALC, fondly called Ajji Mane by children, set against granite hills and rocky outcrops of Deccan Plateau, some now scarred by mining.

Revolving around folktales driven from local knowledge systems, and objects in the surroundings, like leaves, rocks and flowers, the resource persons conducted sessions on various theatre techniques through games and activities.

"We shared 55 folktales in ten days," said Akshay. The outcome: participants are now drafting plays inspired by these folktales, which will then be discussed with contemporary theatre directors. Selected plays are slated for performance at ALC in April.

"The themes are mostly deeply rooted in the culture of the land," Akshay said, adding that one participant is writing the story of a rock, shaping it into a play.

Interestingly, the group of participants was eclectic — a mother and her two adolescent children, a teacher, a therapist and others.

"When we put out the poster, we expected like-minded adults interested in writing folklore-inspired plays for adolescents. Interestingly, children signed up too, making the workshop democratic," said Kotiganahalli Ramaiah. "The presence of children turned out to be the most challenging and the most rewarding part of the workshop."

Lakshman K P, who conducted sessions on theatrical narration, said, "We did not refer to classics or written plays. We spoke about everyday acts like bargaining with a vegetable seller. Drawing from lived experience means recognising the experiences of both performer and audience. That's when a story becomes ours."

The other resource persons included Gangamma, an 86-year-old folk singer and folklorist; Dayananda, an author, theatre personality Satish Tiptur; poet and playwright T H Lavakumar, folk singer and folklorist Sobane Ramaiah and theatre practitioner Chandrashekhar Ninasam.

Ajji Mane

Ajji's Learning Centre was founded by educator Sabiha Hashmi in 2022 with a focus on education of the villagers, especially girls, through workshops and vocational skills.

Affectionately called *Ajji* by local children, Sabiha passed away just a month after the formal inception of ALC. Today, ALC continues her vision. Children, girls and women from over 40 villages in Magadi taluk visit the space to learn tailoring, computers and spoken English. The group also engages in birding and participates in workshops on art and theatre.

Human rights activist Shabnam Hashmi, Sabiha's sister, who leads the initiative now, said ALC has evolved into a hub that refuses to let Sabiha's dream fade. "In a world where rural narratives are often appropriated or caricatured by urban filmmakers and writers, ALC opened its doors for local voices to write their own histories, their tragedies and their comedies," she said.

From story to stage

Kotiganahalli Ramaiah, who has worked with children for over two decades, said, "In recent days, there is a rise in crime among adolescents. Psychological challenges that once appeared in late adolescence are now surfacing in children below nine."

According to him, transferring folk wisdom to younger generations is the need of the hour.

"Social media is increasingly drifting the youth away from their roots," he said. "But do we have resources in our own languages powerful enough to reach a generation raised on 30-second reels?"

Bringing children closer to their lived realities, he believes, is the only way to anchor them — and perhaps rescue them — from an obscure future.

Enthusiasts participate in a playwriting workshop hosted at Ajji's Learning Centre at Jyothipalya in Magadi taluk of Ramanagara district. PHOTOS BY AKSHAY GOWTHAM

Advani falls to Haohui in title clash

BENGALURU, DHNS: Pankaj Advani's hopes of retaining the title hit a roadblock in the form of China's Deng Haohui in the final of the Asian Snooker Championships in Doha on Wednesday.

Despite getting off to a great start, reigning champion Advani came up short against the demon potter, losing 1-4 in a high-quality final. The Chinese cueist did give a few chances, but Advani failed to take them on the day.

In the women's section, a 10-red affair, three Indians – Amee Kamani, Keerthana Pandian and Anupama Ramachandran – advanced to the last-eight stage. While Amee and Keerthana finished their league engagements with an all-win record, Anupama qualified as No. 2 from the group.

In the U-21 category for men, Aarav Sancheti topped Group 'B' to book his place in the knockout pre-quarterfinals. Rahul Williams and Jabez Naveen Kumar, the other two Indians in the fray, failed to make the cut.

Aarav Sancheti

Rajesh brace powers RWF

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rajesh S scored a brace, including an 82nd-minute winner, as RWF FC edged out Jawahar Union FC 3-2 in the BDFA A Division League Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium here on Wednesday.

Manggoulal Kipgen opened the scoring for the Jawahar in the 33rd minute before Jayavandan Sigamani levelled the scores for RWF in the 42nd minute.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Rajesh then stroked RWF ahead in the 56th minute but the lead lasted just five minutes as Raj Gaikwad equalised.

Rajesh then settled the hard-fought affair with the winner eight minutes from time.

Results: Stride FC: 1 (Ginneithang Gangte 81st) drew with Blitz FC: 1 (Ashansh Prasad 34th); RWF FC: 3 (Jayavandan Sigamani 42nd, Rajesh S 56th, 82nd) bt Jawahar Union FC: 2 (Manggoulal Kipgen 33rd, Raj Gaikwad 61st); FC Deccan: 3 (Sai Srujan S 23rd, 33rd, Mohammed Zain Ul Abideen 72nd) bt Income Tax FC: 1 (Narendra Kumar 12th); Sniper FC: 3 (Don Davis 22nd, 48th, Abhil A Thanan Gattil 68th) bt Real Chikmagalur FC: 0.

Selection process for future Olympic hosts set for reform

MILAN, AFP

The International Olympic Committee is considering reforming its procedure for awarding future Games to restore "transparency" and establish a clearer timetable, as the contest looms as to who hosts the 2036 Summer Olympics.

The 2036 race is considered wide open and is expected to feature bids from India and Qatar, with Saudi Arabia, South Korea, South Africa, Turkey and Chile among others.

"While there is no desire to return to the costly pre-2019 bidding process, the current election process requires refinement," said former Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, now an IOC member, to delegates on Wednesday during the IOC Session in Milan ahead of the 2026 Winter Olympics.

Grabar-Kitarovic, who heads a working group on the designation of Olympic hosts set up by IOC president Kirsty Coventry, said she believed "structured timelines, increased transparency and more meaningful participation by IOC members" were required.

IOC chief Kirsty Coventry

Since 2019 -- when Coventry's predecessor Thomas Bach was president -- the IOC has radically changed the way it chooses Games organisers, with the aim of stemming the lack of candidates, reducing costs and avoiding inflicting public humiliation on unsuccessful bidders.

Gone are the suspense-filled elections, seven years before the event, in which the lucky winner was drawn from an envelope during a ceremony broadcast around the world, after costly campaigns to promote bids.

Negotiations are now confidential until the designation of a "preferred host" which is selected behind closed doors by the IOC's Executive Board and approved at the end of the process by the roughly 100 IOC members.

Grabar-Kitarovic said her working group was proposing introducing a "transitional stage".

It would "allow shortlisting of a limited number of interested parties with advanced projects for deeper evaluation".

That evaluation "should be based on transparent criteria published in advance", she added. Grabar-Kitarovic suggested such criteria could include "the importance of venue master plans, clarity on the sports programme, financial guarantees".

Kai Havertz

Arsenal sink Chelsea to snap semis jinx

LONDON, AFP: Arsenal reached the League Cup final for the first time in eight years as Kai Havertz sealed a 1-0 win against Chelsea in the semifinal second leg on Tuesday.

Mikel Arteta's side had put themselves in pole position in the first leg and Havertz came off the bench to finish the 4-2 aggregate victory in the closing moments at the Emirates Stadium.

It was a cathartic triumph for the Gunners, who had lost their previous four semifinals in the 2025 Champions League and League Cup, the 2022 League Cup and the 2021 Europa League.

In their first final for six years, Arsenal will face Manchester City or Newcastle at Wembley on March 22.

City hold a 2-0 lead over Newcastle ahead of Wednesday's second leg at the Etihad Stadium.

Arsenal haven't won the League Cup since 1993, losing in their last three final appearances.

Now they have the chance to end that drought by winning the club's first trophy since the 2020 FA Cup.

That remains the sole silverware won by Arteta since he was hired in December 2019.

It is shaping up to be a memorable season for Arsenal, who are six points clear at the top of the Premier League and reached the Champions League last 16 by winning all eight of their group matches.

TENNIS DAVIS CUP QUALIFIERS

Ball boy to main player: De Jong is living a dream

The 25-year-old is all set to spearhead the Dutch challenge against India

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Netherlands will bank on one of their top players Jesper De Jong to deliver when they take on India in the Davis Cup Qualifiers Round 1 tie at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium in Bengaluru this weekend. DH PHOTO/ PUSHKAR V

Kneeling by the sidelines and shuffling around to feed balls while watching seniors trade blows for his country on a tennis court are fresh memories in Jesper De Jong's mind. The now 25-year-old was all of 12 when he first served as a ball kid at several of Netherlands' home Davis Cup ties. And the rush of emotions, camaraderie among teammates and pride of playing for the Dutch flag that accompanies the country versus country tournament is what excites De Jong.

"I've been a ball boy for four or five years for the Davis Cup matches for my current coach, Thiemo de Bakker, when they played at home against Switzerland, Romania, Croatia and so on," begins the world No. 88 who is here in the city leading the Netherlands' challenge in their Qualifiers Round 1 contest against India this weekend.

"Normally you are alone on the tour. So to be with in a team environment and play for your country, there's no bigger pride than that. It's not the best preparation for our biggest tournament in Holland (ATP 500 Rotterdam starting Feb 11). But at this stage of my career, even if this was in South America or Africa, I would have played," says the right-hander, whose pale turquoise-eyes -- staring at the navy blue-coloured courts at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium -- didn't flinch while uttering these words. If signalling a warning to the opponents through the eyes was a thing, this was it.

His team travelling to India are without their top-two players - Tallon Griekspoor and Botic van de Zandschulp. But it isn't a cause of concern for De Jong as he is well aware of the gruelling demands of being a tennis player.

"Of course, it would have been better for our team if the two would be here. We would have had a stronger squad. But still, we have younger guys coming up who need their chance as well. Yes, there is always pressure.

"Even getting into the top-100 wasn't easy. I could have been their sooner had a won 6-7 matches in 2024, but I didn't."

That's when the fund from ATP, under their Baseline Programme that loans a first-time year-end top-125 entrant with $200,000 for the following season, came in handy for the Haarlem-born pro to break into the top-100, reach his first Tour-level 250 final in Bastad, Sweden and touch a career-high of 71 in 2025.

"It helped enormously. But its not only because of that that I had a good year. It can go either ways. It is extremely tough to stay at the top-100 when every player is good and every match tough. If I have to go back to 120, 125, 150 (rank), I don't really mind. It's all part of the process," he says.

To mark the milestone, De Jong got the words 'It was all a dream' tattooed on the outside of his right bicep. It is indeed the best dream he is living at the moment. And playing to win it for the Netherlands is his sole focus here and now, just as his seniors did years ago when he watched as a ball boy.

Esha shoots double gold, Samrat settles for bronze

Manu opens medal account with victory in team event

NEW DELHI, PTI

Olympian Esha Singh carried her excellent form from last year into the new season, clinching the women's individual 10m air pistol gold and helping the home team to another top-podium finish, even as world champion Samrat Rana settled for bronze on the opening day of the Asian Championships (pistol/rifle) here on Wednesday.

Esha, 21, came from behind to score 239.8 in the final, fending off challenges from two Chinese Taipei shooters -- Cheng Yen-Ching (235.4, silver) and Yu Ai-Wen (217.7, bronze) -- as well as compatriot Suruchi Singh, to claim her second individual senior Asian Championship gold.

Suruchi, 19, who led the final after the first 10-shot stage, slipped dramatically in the elimination round to finish fourth, while Manu Bhaker ended up in seventh place.

The trio of Suruchi (576), Manu (575), and Esha (575) went on to win the team gold with a combined total of 1,726, comfortably ahead of Vietnam (1,713) and Chinese Taipei (1,711), who claimed the silver and bronze respectively.

Samrat raised hopes of another top-podium finish in the season opener.

In the medal round, the 21-year-old shot 220.3 to finish behind Vladimir Svechnikov of Uzbekistan (242.0, gold) and Kazakhstan's Valeriy Rakhimzhan (241.0, silver).

Iran withdraw

The 28-member Iranian shooting contingent, which was scheduled to be here for the Asian Championships that began on Wednesday, has been forced to withdraw after delayed visa applications amid political unrest in that country left the team's travel plans in disarray.

Their absence is a significant blow to the continental championships, as Iran is a strong shooting nation with a consistent record of success in the sport.

Esha Singh (centre) poses with her spoils after winning the women's individual 10m air pistol event at the Asian Rifle/ Shooting Championships in New Delhi on Wednesday. NRAI

Barca huff and puff past Albacete

ALBACETE (SPAIN), AFP: Lamine Yamal and Ronald Araujo goals helped Barcelona reach the Copa del Rey semifinals with a nervy 2-1 win at Albacete on Tuesday.

The record 32-time cup winners were pushed to the end in a tight quarterfinal clash by their second division opponents, who stunned Real Madrid in the previous round.

Yamal fired Barca ahead just before half-time and Araujo headed home the second early after the break on his first start since taking a month-long mental health break at the end of last year.

Albacete created several chances in the last half hour and Javi Moreno headed home with three minutes to go to give Hansi Flick's Barca a scare.

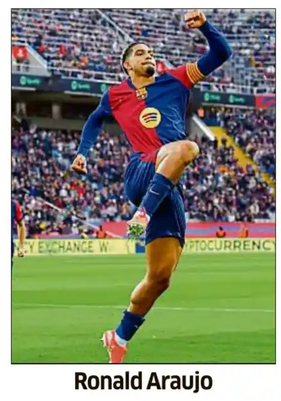
Holders Barca spurned some fine chances, just as they did in their win over Elche in La Liga on Saturday. Barcelona controlled the game in the first half but could not easily break down Albacete's resistance.

Marcus Rashford spurned a couple of decent openings in the opening few minutes, and after that the hosts shut up shop against Flick's side.

Spanish champions Barcelona's brightest player was, as usual, teenage star Yamal, and he struck in the 39th minute.

Rashford pressed well to win the ball back, and Frenkie de Jong's pass bobbled into Yamal's path for the 18-year-old to curl home.

Antonio Puertas got in behind Barca's defence at the other end but goalkeeper Joan Garcia was able to snag the loose ball.



Ronald Araujo

IN BRIEF

India romp into SAFF U-17 final

▶ The Indian U-17 women's team defeated Bhutan 8-0 in their last round-robin fixture of the SAFF U19 Women's Championship to reach the final at the Pokhara Rangasala Stadium in Pokhara, Nepal on Wednesday, reports DHNS.

Pearl Fernandes (16th, 39th, 41st) scored a first-half hat-trick, while Pritika Barman (25th, 90th) got one goal in each half. Alisha Lyngdoh (6th), Abhista Basnett (10th), and Divyani Linda (17th) netted one apiece. India will face Bangladesh in the final on Saturday.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

WPL final: RCB vs Delhi Capitals **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

FOOTBALL

Copa del Rey QF: Real Betis vs Atletico Madrid **(1:30 am, Friday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

SHOOTING

Asian Rifle/Pistol C'Ships: 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team/Women **(10:30 am)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

Indian badminton teams march into quarterfinals

QINGDAO (CHINA), PTI: Indian men overcame a strong challenge from Singapore, while the women dominated Myanmar in their opening group stage matches to secure quarterfinal berths in the Badminton Asia Team Championships here on Wednesday.

Malvika Bansod

The men's Group C clash between India and Singapore went down to the wire, with former world number 1 Kidambi Srikanth coming up with a clinical performance in the third men's singles against Jia Wei Joel Koh.

Srikanth won 21-15, 21-16 to ensure that the Indian men's team began their campaign with a win and assured themselves of a last-eight spot, as Singapore had lost their first group game against Japan 1-4.

India's match did not get off to the desired start, as Lakshya Sen went down 21-16, 19-21, 21-16 against former world champion Loh Kean Yew.

But Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty restored parity with a 21-10, 21-8 win over Eng Keat Wesley Koh and Junsuke Kubo 21-10, 21-8 and Ayush Shetty then defeated Jia Heng Jason Teh 21-17, 21-15 to give India the lead.

Chanu lifts 205kg, breaks three NRs to win gold at National C'ships

MODINAGAR, PTI: Olympic silver medallist Mirabai Chanu delivered a statement performance, bettering three of her own national records while clinching the women's 48kg title at the National Weightlifting Championships here on Wednesday.

The multiple-time World Championships medallist registered a combined lift of 205kg (89kg in snatch + 116kg in clean and jerk), setting new national marks in snatch, clean and jerk and total effort.

"I am delighted. This performance has boosted my confidence. Earlier, I was competing in 49kg, to be able to achieve this result in 48kg is great.

"I hope in the next competition I cross the 90kg mark. Today also I tried but since I had not had proper training I was not able to do it. But once the training is in full flow I'm sure I'll lift 90kg," Chanu said after her performance.

Hitesh, Preeti cruise into second round

LA NUCIA (SPAIN), PTI: Hitesh Gulia (70kg) and Preeti (54kg) registered commanding wins as India opened its campaign in emphatic fashion at the BOXAM Elite International 2026, delivering a string of dominant performances on the first day of the tournament here.

The tournament has drawn 214 boxers from 21 nations. Headlining the Indian charge were World Boxing Cup Finals champions Gulia and Preeti, both cruising to the next round as the country's pugilists notched wins across multiple weight categories.

Hitesh was in complete control in the elite men's 70kg bout, dispatching the Netherlands' Finn Bos with a comprehensive 5:0 verdict. Calm, measured and incisive, the Indian showcased his trademark ring intelligence and timing to dictate proceedings from start to finish.

Earlier, Preeti set the tone in the elite women's 54kg division with a clinical 5:0 win over Kazakhstan's Aliaskar Symbat, combining sharp combinations with disciplined defence to shut out her opponent completely.

India's women continued their strong run with Prachi (57kg), Priya (60kg) and Kajal (65kg) all advancing in style. Prachi and Priya posted identical 5:0 victories over Spain's Vanesa Morell Ramirez and Canada's Alessia Mansuetto, respectively.

Marjine looks to reinstall unity in fractured team

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

When Sjoerd Marjine decided to return to India to coach the women's hockey team following a four-year sabbatical, it came as a surprise to many. Yes, the Dutchman had engineered one of the highest peaks in women's hockey by finishing fourth at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, but a lot has transpired since his exit right after the heartbreaking bronze-medal game.

Sjoerd Marjine

Then, a well-functioning unit with talent bursting at the seams, the women's team is at a crossroads today. Last December, coach Harendra Singh tendered his resignation after reports of mass player revolt against his 'dictatorial' style of functioning. Some players even alleged Harendra of 'mental harassment', saying his training methods were causing frequent injuries. Talks of groupism, which had held Indian women's hockey back for long, resurfaced, and the divisions between seniors and juniors were there for all to see.

Even Marjine's slate wasn't clean, as his book -- "Will Power: The Inside Story of the Incredible Turnaround in Indian Women's Hockey" -- which came out in late 2022, courted a lot of controversy, with players like Manpreet Singh and Gurjit Kaur filing defamation cases. So when Hockey India, which backed the players in the legal trouble while maintaining that dressing room secrets shouldn't be revealed, brought Marjine back in January, the move left the fraternity befuddled.

So what prompted Marjine to abandon an easygoing life in the Netherlands and return to the cockpit of India, where he not only has to steady a turbulent ship but also ensure they perform strongly, considering three big events are lined up this season?

"I feel so much respect. I'm very thankful to be here. And India has always been my second country. I feel a lot for India. Of course, I get the question many times, 'Why are you doing this? You have a legacy, and you did really well, and things are not going well (for India)'," said Marjine during a virtual media interaction.

"But that's not the way I'm thinking. I'm thinking this is a really nice challenge with girls who are so motivated if you really treat them well. With an organisation like Hockey India and SAI, which have taken big steps in professionalism, behind, I'm enthusiastic to be with the team and to create this performance.

"The legacy alone from the Olympics 2021 doesn't help me to become old. But I have to watch myself in the mirror and think I did everything I could to make this happen. It's the challenge that makes it very interesting for me."

The first biggest test in a hectic year for Marjine would be the World Cup Qualifiers in Hyderabad next month. The 51-year-old, hopeful of success, said his main goal in his second stint would be to restore unity and discipline. "My main focus is to create a unit, that's very important, and bring back the culture. Working together as a team, bring over my knowledge in a short time before the World Cup qualifiers, and that is going to be a big challenge.

"One unit, discipline, and a task-driven approach will win you medals. It's a step-by-step approach for me. First the World Cup qualifiers and then the Nations Cup. I know what needs to be done. I know how I want to see the team in 2028. All 29 players in the squad are important for me. I told them what happened in the past is past. I am very clear and direct with them. We don't have to be best friends, but still, we can have fun; it's all about performance. They should enjoy what they are doing," said Marjine.

CRICKET WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

Confident RCB eye second title

Having entered 4th straight final, DC look to break final jinx

VADODARA, PTI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Smriti Mandhana will have the opportunity to lead her side to parity with Mumbai Indians in terms of success in the Women's Premier League, while Delhi Capitals will look to break their final jinx when the tournament's two most entertaining sides take on each other in the summit clash here on Thursday.

LIVE, STAR SPORTS, JIOHOTTSTAR, 7:30 PM

Former champions RCB have enjoyed a dream run this season, repeatedly showing the ability to step up and bounce back when the chips are down. That resilience helped them create history by beginning their campaign with five consecutive wins, becoming the first WPL team to do so.

Adding to that, one or two players from within the group have consistently taken their game to the next level when required, a pattern that has emerged with monotonous regularity this season.

If Australian stalwart Grace Harris' blazing 75 against UP Warriorz in the previous match -- after a topsy-turvy season -- set the tone for an emphatic eight-wicket win, then little-known Gautami Naik's 73 against Gujarat Giants proved pivotal in a commanding 61-run victory for the 2024 champions, who will be aiming for a second title to draw level with Mumbai Indians.

Although RCB batters -- including Mandhana, Harris, Georgia Voll and Richa Ghosh -- have lacked consistency this season, isolated but timely contributions have proved decisive. Pace bowlers Nadine de Klerk and Sayali Satghare have delivered when it has mattered most.

South African Nadine de Klerk is currently the third-highest wicket-taker this season with 15 scalps from eight matches, including a best of 4 for 22, making her a potential game-changer in the final. Shreyanka Patil adds spin heft to the attack, a factor that was on full display in the decimation of Gujarat Giants, where she returned a five-wicket haul.

A well-rounded squad that can rise at crucial moments is the hallmark of Mandhana's side, and she will be hoping a few more players to step up in the title clash to see off the challenge from Delhi Capitals.

The Capitals, under new skipper Jemimah Rodrigues, are eager for a maiden title after finishing runners-up in all three previous editions of the WPL.

Delhi Capitals have relied on the strength of their formidable bowling lineup, with pacers Chinelle Henry and Nandani Sharma making their presence felt with the new ball.

Delhi Capitals' captain Jemimah Rodrigues (left) and her RCB counterpart Smriti Mandhana pose with the trophy on the eve of the WPL final in Vadodara. PTI

Nandani, who could stake a claim for an India berth after taking 16 wickets this season to emerge the second-highest wicket-taker, has been the standout performer with several breakthrough spells.

On the batting front, Delhi Capitals' lineup has also begun to click. Lizelle Lee made a useful contribution at the top in the Eliminator against Gujarat Giants, while Shafali Verma managed to put her iffy form behind to forge a half-century partnership with the South African.

Reliable top-order batter Laura Wolvaardt has provided the stability the side needed throughout the season.

With both their batting and bowling heavily influenced by South African players, the Capitals have benefited from a tight-knit core that has played together for several years, fostering strong camaraderie and resilience in high-pressure situations.

That strong bond could prove crucial for Delhi Capitals as they aim to break their jinx and win the WPL title on their fourth attempt, guided by their new and charismatic skipper Rodrigues, who is poised for a big innings after a relatively subdued season.

CRICKET U-19 WORLD CUP

India colts storm into record 10th final

George smashes century in thumping 7-wicket win over Afghanistan

HARARE, PTI

Aaron George's silken hundred seamlessly merged with the explosive fifties from IPL stars Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Ayush Mhatre guided India to the ICC U-19 World Cup final with a seven-wicket win over Afghanistan here on Wednesday.

India now face England in the summit clash here on Friday. It will be India's 10th final in the U-19 showpiece, a testimony to BCCI's structured junior cricket programme that unearths serious talent.

India seemed to have a tough task ahead once Afghanistan piled 310 for four, built around hundreds by Faisal Shinozada (110) and Uzairullah Niazal (101).

But India cantered past the target in 41.1 overs and it was also their highest-ever chase in the U-19 World Cup. Aaron (115, 104b) led the chase with a hundred of impeccable pace and precision placements of his shots.

He received ample backing from Sooryavanshi (68, 33b) and Mhatre (62, 59b) as India kept their run-rate above seven all the while.

As is his vaunt, Sooryavanshi gave a flying start to India's innings with a flurry of boundaries, mainly off off-spinner Wahidullah Zadran.

Aaron George scored a 104-ball 115 during Indian colts' semifinal win over Afghanistan in Harare on Wednesday. X

There was a slice of fortune too when Niazal dropped the left-hander on 22 at point off Abdul Aziz.

But around that lapse, Sooryavanshi batted quite aggressively, even pulling off a stunning helicopter shot six off pacer Nooristani Omarzai.

There were repeated attempts to play pull shot in his innings, which eventually became his undoing - an aimless hoick off Omarzai ended in the hands of Osman Sadat inside the circle.

The opening wicket alliance stopped at 93, but Aaron then combined with Mhatre to add another 114 runs in just over 17 overs to take India past 200 in the 27th over.

Mhatre, who has been struggling for his rhythm in this tournament, made a fifty at the right moment, displaying his full selection of shots.

Once again, Aaron played the anchor's role to perfection as Mhatre took all the risks to keep his side much ahead of the asking rate.

Mhatre's dismissal did not deter Aaron, and he batted on as composedly as has been doing in this innings.

Brief scores: Afghanistan: 310/4 in 50 overs (Osman Sadat 39, Khalid Ahmadzai 31, Faisal Shinozada 110, Uzairullah Niazai 101; Deepesh Devendran 2-64, Kanishk Chouhan 2-55) lt to India: 311/3 in 41.1 overs (Aaron George 115, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 68, Ayush Mhatre 62, Vihaan Malhotra 38 n.o.; Nooristani Omarzai 2-64) by 7 wkts.

Amruth ton, Bhagawan fifer power dominant Dooravani

BENGALURU, DHNS: A big century by Amruth S followed by a fifer by his teammate Shri Bhagawan Singh helped Dooravani Cricketers (2) to a resounding victory over Bangalore United in a KSCA Group I-V Division league-cum-knockout tournament for the JB Mallaradhya Shield.

Amruth's unbeaten 139 took Dooravani to 325/7 in 50 overs. In response, United were 157 all out in 29.2 overs as Bhagawan (5/38) went through their batting line-up.

Brief scores: Dooravani Cricketers (2): 325/7 in 50 overs (Amruth S 139 n.o., Harsha B 57; Aryansh Singh 4-43, Hemankith Reddy M 3-58) beat Bangalore United CC (2): 157 all out in 29.2 overs (Mohit Gowda BN 29, Hemankith Reddy M 29; Shri Bhagawan Singh 5-38, Raghuveer S 2-42, Mahesh Patel BM 2-38).

Oriental CC: 183 all out in 46.2 overs (Abhishek Kumar Singh 57, Pratheesh Premdas 46; Raghuveer Rajpurohit 5-16, Prapul Pateel GR 3-26) bt Bangalore SCC: 162 all out in 38.5 overs (Santosh Kumar S 56, Nandhan V 31; Gurram Ravikanth 5-43).

Government Arts College: 147 all out in 32.3 overs (Gowtham S 78; Prasanna G 3-28, Janardhan R 2-37, Dileep Narasimhamurthy 2-35) lt to Star Cricketers XI: 151/4 in 17.4 overs (Prashanth Giridhara 50 n.o., Vinay S 50 n.o.; Mahesh R 2-29, Satwik S Achar 2-31).

Head Quarters CC: 181/8 in 34 overs (Chethan Reddy S 38, Shashank HC 33, Ajay R 32, Sujay 31 n.o.; Dhanush Pai 2-17, Akanksh Konduru 2-25, Sutej Simha KV 2-53) lt to BMS Engineering College: 182/9 in 39.3 overs (Karan N 50, Dheemanth Keerthi R 29 n.o., Amogh M 24; Pavan NS 3-57, Sujay 2-20).

Young Boys Cricket Club, Kolar: 135 all out in 33.1 overs (AM Srihari 53; Suhaan Bhandary 5-37, Yeshwanth N 2-15) lost to Kengeri Cricketers: 136/3 in 28.3 overs (Yeshwanth N 48, Rahul G Raju 46 n.o.).

Friends Cricket Club: 131 all out in 45 overs (Arjun A 49, Kishore KR 26 n.o.; Inbarasaganan Bharathi 5-21, Karan MC 2-13) lost to Vivekanagar Cricketers: 132/3 in 20.2 overs (M Kishore 61 n.o., Aakash Suresh 25).

Anekal Town CC: 264 all out in 46.3 overs (Venkateshh 59, Yashwantha 55, Sridhar 54; Paarth Madan 3-46, Nithin A V 3-42, Neil Bhatnagar 2-28) beat Deccan United Cricket Club: 140 all out in 32.2 overs (Panshul Sharma 39, Nithin AV 26; Abhilash 3-40, Yashwantha 2-25, Purushothama C 2-1).

Kishan locks his place as India down SA

NAVI MUMBAI, PTI

In-form Ishan Kishan's minute-a-mile half-century helped him lock his place in the top order as India completed a 30-run victory over South Africa in their only warm-up match ahead of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

Ishan went hammer and tongs to smash seven sixes and two fours as his 20-ball 53 underlined another dominant show from Indian batters, who piled up a massive 241 for five on a placid wicket here at the DY Patil Stadium.

The T20 World Cup defending champions then used as many as nine bowling options including three overs from Abhishek Sharma (2/32), restricting South Africa for 210/7.

However, frontline pacer Harshit Rana (0/16) left the field after sending down his only over of the night, in which he pulled out of his run-up twice and eventually did not return to the action.

Ishan Kishan hits one out of the park during India's 30-run win over South Africa in the T20 World Cup warm-up match at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai on Wednesday. AFP

South Africa experimented by sending George Linde (0) to open with Aiden Markram (38 retired out), which did not yield any result with the former being dismissed for a four-ball duck in the first over from Arshdeep Singh (1/29).

Ryan Rickelton hit a 21-ball 44 with three sixes and four boundaries while Jason Smith struck 35 off 23 balls.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, meanwhile, took no part in the match.

Earlier in the first half, Ishan showed his array of strokes including some powerful flicks on the on-side that went sailing over the ropes to make the only half-century of the game.

Ishan came out firing to put on an 80-run stand with Abhishek (24 off 17 balls, retired out) inside the powerplay.

With Sanju Samson struggling for runs, Ishan is expected to open the batting alongside Abhishek in the tournament opener against USA at Wankhede on February 7.

Brief scores: India 240/6 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 53, Tilak Varma 45, Suryakumar Yadav 30, Axar Patel 35, Hardik Pandya 30) bt South Africa: 210/7 in 20 overs (Aiden Markram 38, Ryan Rickelton 44, Jason Smith 35, Tristan Stubbs 45 n.o., Marco Jansen 31; Abhishek Sharma 2-32). **Result:** India won by 30 runs.

Eng warm up in style for WC

PALLEKELE (SRI LANKA), AP: England rounded off their T20 World Cup preparations in style by sweeping the series 3-0 against Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

Left-arm spinner Jacob Bethell (4/11) was the unlikely hero as he grabbed the last four wickets in eight balls and Sri Lanka crumbled to 116 all out in the third and final game.

Sam Curran's career-best 58 off 48 balls had earlier lifted England to 128/9.

Sri Lanka needed 17 off 17 balls before Bethell ran through the tail.

Brief scores: England: 128/9 in 20 overs (Jos Buttler 25, Sam Curran 58; Dushmantha Chameera 5-24, Matheesha Pathirana 2-27) bt Sri Lanka: 116 all out in 19.3 overs (Kusal Mendis 26, Jacob Bethell 4-11, Will Jacks 3-14) by 12 runs. **Series:** England won series 3-0. **PoM:** Sam Curran. **PoS:** Sam Curran.

Tendulkar pep talk to Mumbai ahead of Katnataka clash

MUMBAI, PTI: The legendary Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday shared his ideas on handling pressure and maintaining a winning mindset with the Mumbai players ahead of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Karnataka.

The 42-time winners Mumbai will take on the eight-time champions Karnataka in the quarterfinal of the 2025-26 season here at the MCA-BKC Ground from February 6-10.

A former Mumbai captain, Tendulkar, fielded questions from both the players and the coaching staff during their meeting at the BKC facility.

"We were lucky to be graced by Sachin sir's presence in the dressing room today (Wednesday). Rather than just a pep talk from him, it was more of a Q&A session," Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur said.

Sachin Tendulkar (right) with Mumbai captain Shardul Thakur. PTI

"All players and respective coaches asked him (a) variety of questions. (The) questions were about approach, preparation, winning mindset and handling pressure in tough situations."

T20 WORLD CUP: GROUP B PREVIEW

Aus look to hit the straps, SL bank on home support

SIDNEY KIRAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

When it comes to acing marquee cricket events, there's none better than Australia. The Aussies have won a record six ODI World Cups out of 13 editions, one World Test Championship, and two ICC Champions Trophy. They are an irresistible force in one-day and red-ball cricket.

However, the same can't be said when it comes to T20Is, despite the Aussies possessing some of the biggest hitters -- a delayed title triumph in 2021 mirrors their underachievement. That Australian squad was labelled very 'Test-like,' but under the captaincy of Aaron Finch, the Aussies defied odds in the Middle East. That trophy apart, their performance in the showpiece event of the shortest format has been ordinary to say the least, failing to reach the semifinals in the last two editions. In fact, they didn't reach the knockout stage on three other occasions.

It's this average record that Mitchell Marsh and his men will be looking to improve, and take Australia back to the pinnacle when they kick off their campaign against a dangerous Ireland in Colombo on February 11. And it won't be easy as evidenced in the just-concluded T20I series in Pakistan, where they were blanked 3-0. Yes, Australia fielded a depleted side by leaving out several players back home to give them time to recover for the World Cup following a hectic summer, but questions remain about the form and fitness of several key players.

Marsh, undoubtedly, will have to lead from the front, but a lot will depend on the starts maverick opener Travis Head provides.

One of the most fearsome hitters in world cricket, Head has a special ability to tear apart any attack in the world, and when on song, there's nothing that can stop him. Big-hitters Cameron Green, Josh Inglis, Matt Renshaw and Marcus Stoinis — all checking in with middling returns — will have to come to the party from the start.

Another side, which will also be looking to turn a new leaf, having gone down the pecking order following a maiden title triumph in 2014, are co-hosts Sri Lanka. Since that emotional night in Dhaka, where Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene finally laid their hands on a World Cup trophy, Sri Lanka have stumbled in the ensuing editions. They won just one game in 2016, had to play the qualifying rounds to enter the tournament proper in 2021, failed to reach the knockouts the next year, and were knocked out in the first round in 2024 — their worst performance to date.

However, armed with home advantage, the Lankans will be confident of extending their stay this time. They have a good bowling attack comprising Wanindu Hasaranga, Maheesha Pathirana and Dushmantha Chameera, but it's their underwhelming batting that's a massive concern. In the just-concluded series against England at home, which they lost 3-0, they were bowled out for 133 and 116. Given how dangerous Ireland and Zimbabwe can be, there is no room for error, and the likes of Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Kamindu Mendis and Kamil Mishara will have to step up their game.

Ireland, who have earned a reputation as 'giant-killers' in ODI World Cups, will be eyeing something similar in T20Is. They are handed a tough start, up against Sri Lanka first and then Australia, but an upset in one of them could take them to the Super8s which would be an achievement.

Oman and Zimbabwe are the other two teams in the group, and their goal will be to prove they are not here to just make up the numbers.

Record in T20 Internationals

	Australia	Sri Lanka	Ireland	Zimbabwe	Oman
Matches	222	225	185	186	110
Won	123	101	78	67	53
Lost	92	122	97	116	56
No result	7	2	9	3	1

After T20 WC snub, Smith to play in PSL

MELBOURNE, PTI: Snubbed from Australia's T20 World Cup squad despite strong form, veteran batter Steve Smith has signed with new Pakistan Super League franchise Sialkot Stallionz in a bid to force his way back into the national short-format side.

Despite starring in the Ashes and enjoying an excellent Big Bash League season with the Sydney Sixers, Smith was ignored for the T20 World Cup which will be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7.

Smith, who has expressed his desire to feature at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics — which will see cricket return in the T20 format — is the first player signed by Stallionz, according to a report in *cricket.com.au*.

The 36-year-old batter has already indicated that he will take a day-to-day approach to his playing future, saying, "One day I might wake up and say I've had enough."

The Stallionz and Hyderabad Kingsmen are the two new franchises to feature in PSL, taking the total number of teams to eight.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com